

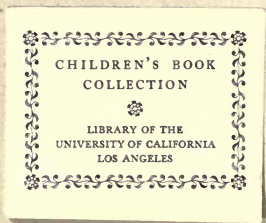
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CONSTANCE AND CAROLINE.



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CONSTANCE AND CAROLINE



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CONSTANCE AND CAROLINE,

A

Moral Tale,

BY

A YOUNG LADY.

“ In Infancy their hopes and fears
Were to each other known ;
And Friendship in their riper years
Entwined their hearts in one.”

LONDON:

J. HARRIS AND SON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1823.

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DEDICATION

TO

THOMAS HURST, Esq.

THE claims of friendship have prevailed, I fear, over your better judgment, in allowing your name to be prefixed to this little work. But should it prove a means of stimulating youthful genius to an early trial of its strength, by shewing what may be done in the intervals of school hours: and still more, should its contrasted characters exhibit the real superiority of religious principles and virtuous habits over the mere shewy tinsel of fashionable education; then, indeed, your kind encouragement of a *very* youthful writer will be doubly valuable, her wishes of being useful to her young friends amply rewarded; and an unmixed sentiment of grateful obligation will be felt,

By your faithful,

“ But nameless” Friend,

A PARENT.

PREFACE.

THE only characters attempted to be drawn in this little work, are those with which alone our young authoress is conversant, those of her own sex; and to have introduced a hero (the proper criterion of novel writing) would have been an effort beyond the knowledge or reading of a school-room, and in which she would have exhibited a caricature, rather than a likeness. The distinction between this kind of writing, and that noxious weed of the imagination, a novel, is broadly marked in the elementary works of the present day: for the one aims solely at

utility, the other at amusement. The latter employs its powers, as the fool does his firebrand, for the purpose of inflaming the passions, and kindling them into a blaze: whereas the former, looking to the improvement of the heart and mind, introduces its *dramatis personæ*, merely to expose folly, correct the prevailing vices of the times, and to exhibit the beautiful consistency of a strict adherence on the side of virtue. Education has properly become the polished handmaid of religion, combining the elegance of refined taste with the solid attainments of cultivated reason, and training the youthful mind to habits of self-examination, piety and active benevolence. Such has been the tendency of all the writings of a Hannah More, and others of that school, replete with wisdom, and the lessons of experience; and such should

always be the employment of those, who avail themselves of the great moral engine of the Press, and with whom neither the vanity of authorship, nor the hopes of gain, ought to have any weight, compared with the high responsibility of becoming the means of moral good or moral evil to the rising generation.

Were a single sentiment in this volume of injurious, or even doubtful tendency, it would have been consigned to the flames, instead of appearing before the Public; but better things are augured of it; and, deprecating the severity of criticism, which would entirely destroy the *blossom* of this *early plant*, the shoots whereof, under favourable culture, may grow up to be a comely cedar of Lebanon, in the garden of genius, it is hoped that the exposure of pride and sensibility from the pen of an

equal, may impress our young readers with sentiments of humility, and of proper firmness of character, under all the trials and vicissitudes of life; and should a “Georgina” chance to glance her eyes over these pages, she will learn to distrust mere outward accomplishments, which can never screen an ill-regulated and vicious mind from the consequences of ignominy and shame; and that, to be truly amiable and generally admired, she must combine the solid and ever verdant graces of a religious education, with the lighter and more brilliant acquirements of fashionable life and refined manners.

CONSTANCE AND CAROLINE ;

A Tale.

CHAPTER I.

“WHAT a melancholy accident,” exclaimed Constance Granville, as she laid down the newspaper she had been reading.

“May I read it to you, Aunt?”

“If you please, Constance,” said Mrs. Villiers, who was working at a table near her. Constance then read as follows :

“It is with great concern we have to relate, that yesterday, as Lord Melrose was riding in the park, his horse took fright and threw him ; he was

dragged some distance ere his attendant could pick him up : in consequence of which, he was so much hurt, that great fears are entertained for his Lordship's life."

Constance might have read on much longer without being interrupted by Mrs. Villiers, for when the former raised her eyes from the paper, she observed that her aunt had sunk back on her chair in a state of insensibility. Much alarmed, she flew to the bell ; and then raised the fainting form of Mrs. Villiers in her arms ; at this moment the door opened, and Caroline Villiers entered the apartment, to the great relief of her cousin.

" Ah ! Constance, is my mother dead ?" said the agitated girl, as she gazed on the pale and death-like countenance of her beloved parent, who at

this moment opened her eyes, and hiding her face in her hands, burst into tears : these in a few minutes relieved her ; she went immediately to her own apartment, and desired to remain alone for the rest of the evening.

After Mrs Villiers had left the room, Caroline entreated her cousin to inform her of the cause of her mother's distressing situation ; and on finding her as ignorant on the subject as herself, they wearied themselves with conjectures, till it was time to retire to rest. Caroline then made an affectionate inquiry after her mother : who returned for answer, that she was considerably better, and promised to meet the two girls at breakfast the following morning.

Delighted at the prospect of having their anxiety so speedily terminated,

the two cousins retired, and in a short time forgot, in quiet slumbers, the remembrance of what had occasioned it.

According to her promise, Mrs. Villiers met her young people at the breakfast table: she was composed, but silent and melancholy, and imputed her fainting the preceding afternoon, merely to over fatigue; and then turning the conversation, told them she was going to the village at twelve o'clock, and if they could finish preparing their different studies by that hour, it would give her the greatest pleasure to have their company.

They eagerly acceded to the proposal of accompanying her; after which, Mrs. Villiers retired to her dressing-room to write some letters, and Constance and Caroline to their

little school-room, where they were accustomed to spend their mornings, and which contained their instrument, drawing apparatus, and books.

We will take advantage of their absence to introduce our readers to Mrs. Villiers and her family.

Mrs. Villiers had been married, at the age of seventeen, to an officer in the army, unsanctioned by the approbation of her friends.

She was the eldest daughter of the Earl and Countess of Melrose; but since her marriage, Lady Emily (for that was her name) had resigned her title, and was simply Mrs. Villiers: from that period her parent had refused to notice her, and in order to spare her the suffering which their unkindness would occasion, her husband complied with her earnest wish to ac-

company him on foreign service. Superior to every fear of difficulty and danger, she accompanied the regiment in every part of a campaign ; till she at length had the mournful duty to perform of nursing and soothing the last moments of Colonel Villiers, who was mortally wounded at the battle of Salamanca.

Bereft of her husband at nineteen, Mrs. Villiers hastened to quit a country which to her had been a land of misery, and, accompanied by her infant Caroline, she returned to England by the vessel that brought the news of the victory.

On her arrival in London, she wrote to her step-mother, Lady Melrose, and entreated her to intercede on her behalf with her father : for some time she received no answer, but when a

reply did arrive, it gave a decided negative to all her hopes and wishes. Lady Melrose herself was a young woman compared with her husband Lord Melrose, and she cordially disliked the children of his first marriage: but especially Lady Emily, who, from being more admired and handsomer than herself, was the most calculated to excite her envy. She left nothing untried to destroy the fond affection of Lord Melrose for his daughter, in which she unhappily succeeded: for Lady Emily's home was rendered perfectly miserable for some time previous to her imprudent and hasty marriage.

Colonel Villiers, too, had on his part, displeased his father by the choice he had made; and though Lady Emily's family and connexions would have

rendered the match desirable in a worldly point of view, yet her want of fortune (for Lord Melrose refused to give her any) was an insuperable objection in the mind of the prudent father of Colonel Villiers. Had her husband lived, it is probable all would have been happily settled, and the virtues of Lady Emily have triumphed over the dislike his family expressed towards her; but if, when his son was alive, the elder Mr. Villiers refused to see him or his bride, is it to be wondered at that he should refuse to see or assist the widow of that son, when the only tie which bound her to him was no more?

Thus deserted by her natural friends and relations, Mrs. Villiers was obliged to rouse herself to exertion, and to call to her aid all those powers with

which nature had liberally endowed her, but which the misfortunes that had assailed her had in some degree depressed. Her character now displayed its wonted energy, and enabled her promptly to decide on a plan of retirement, commensurate to the smallness of her income.

The air of Devonshire had always agreed with her health, and she was partial to the country from having, when a child, passed a portion of every year at one of its watering places ; and hearing of a small, ready-furnished villa, or rather cottage, situated near Ilfracombe, in the north of Devonshire, which was likely to answer her purpose, Mrs. Villiers engaged it without delay, and took possession of her new residence, attended by her little girl and one female servant. Here,

retired and unknown, this amiable woman determined on spending the remainder of her life in perfect privacy, and by devoting herself to the education of her little Caroline, and the discharge of every maternal duty, she hoped to soften, if not entirely to dispel the remembrance of the past.

When her mind had somewhat recovered its serenity, from her change of abode, Mrs Villiers addressed a letter to a younger sister, who had been married prior to her leaving England, and to whom she was particularly attached ; in it she detailed her present and future plans, and expressed a most anxious desire to hear from her as early as possible ; but four months had now nearly elapsed, and Mrs. Villiers had resigned all hope of receiving any answer to her letter.

CHAPTER II.

ONE day, as Mrs. Villiers was returning from a solitary walk, she passed the windows of the cottage, and was surprised to see a lady seated in the parlour, caressing and playing with her child. She hastily entered the room; the stranger turned her head towards the door; they looked at each other a moment, and in the next were clasped in each other's arms, and the cheek of Lady Ennerdale was fondly pressed against the pale and altered one of her sister. After the agitation of the first embrace was a little subsided, Mrs. Villiers inquired of Lady Ennerdale the cause of her long silence.

“ It was owing, my dear sister, to your letter being directed to our London residence; and, as we were absent, I did not receive it till a few days ago.”

All the mystery was now cleared up, and Lady Ennerdale kindly blamed her sister for thinking it possible she could ever treat her with neglect and unkindness. But just as Mrs. Villiers saw her hopes revived of finding a kind and affectionate friend in this dear sister, she was destined to feel the bitter pang of separation, on learning that the companion of her earliest years was on the point of being separated from her for so long a period, and at a distance so great, that it almost precluded the expectation of their meeting again. In fact, Lord and Lady Ennerdale were going out to India,

where a lucrative situation had been given to his Lordship, and it was believed that a foreign clime would be conducive to the re-establishment of his health, which was extremely delicate.

No selfish wish to remain behind in England, and leave Lord Ennerdale to encounter alone the fatigues and distresses of a long voyage, had any, even the slightest influence on the mind of his amiable lady; but her anxiety was proportioned by, and excited as to where to leave their only child, a little girl about two years old.

A quarrel had unhappily taken place between Lord Melrose and Lord Ennerdale, or the little Constance would probably have been committed to the care of her grandfather: to leave her

entirely in the charge of strangers, however kind they might prove towards her, was a surrender of duty which her affectionate parents could not consent to.

Lady Ennerdale named the difficult circumstances under which she was placed to her sister, and requested her to accept the charge of her during their absence ; at the same time alluding, though in the most delicate manner, to the smallness of Mrs. Villiers' income, which might make the reception of another inmate inconvenient to the scale of her establishment ; so that neither Lord Ennerdale or herself would permit it, unless she would accept a yearly allowance for the expenses of their child.

“ My dear Caroline,” said Mrs. Villiers, gravely, “ no pecuniary mo-

tives should influence me in taking care of Constance; nor have I the least objection to receive her into this retired cottage, provided that you do not force me to accept of any thing but your love; but, my dear sister, I will not be paid for the education of Constance, and while she resides with me, she shall share with Caroline my maternal love and attention."

Mrs. Villiers then explained, in a concise manner, the plan of education she intended to pursue, frankly stating all the disadvantages Constance might meet with, and all the objections which might be made to it. In a few days the sisters were to part, as Lady Ennerdale was to join her Lord in London; but, before that time arrived, it was finally arranged that Mrs. Villiers

was to become the guardian of her niece.

Lady Ennerdale expressed the warmest gratitude to her sister, for her acquiescence with her wishes. The day at last arrived, when Lady Ennerdale was to take leave of her affectionate sister, and about a week after her departure the little Constance became an inmate at the cottage.

Mrs. Villiers received a letter from her sister, previous to her embarkation, containing a draft for more than Constance could possibly want: and the letter contained the tenderest wishes for the health and happiness of herself and the children.

The years Lady Ennerdale named as the probable period of her return from India, fourteen, had now elapsed, and she was expected home in the

course of another year. During this long interval, Mrs. Villiers continued to reside at the cottage, devoted to the charge she had undertaken, and watching with a parent's fondness every improvement in either Caroline or Constance ; indeed, it would have been difficult for a common observer to have discovered which of the two was most dear to the heart of Mrs. Villiers. But it is now time to give some account of the two girls we have already introduced to our readers, who will, we trust, pardon this digression.

Caroline Villiers was about sixteen : her figure was tall, slight, and elegant ; her complexion dark, relieved, however, by a pair of brilliant hazle eyes, and a profusion of very dark brown hair ; her countenance was animated and pleasing, though not regularly pretty ;

it was impossible to be in her company without admiring her; she was clever and lively, but apt to be led away by the example of others: her temper was quick, almost amounting to what the French call *brusque*, which, added to a considerable share of pride and thoughtlessness, which not even her mother's watchful care could quite subdue, were the principal faults of Caroline's disposition; on the other hand, she was generous and ingenuous, fondly attached to her mother and cousin, and so uniformly cheerful, that she was the life of the little circle at the cottage.

Gentle, mild, and amiable was Constance Granville, in some respects, the reverse of her cousin. Her figure was elegant and slight, almost to fragility; her skin transparently fair; her

eyes blue, and her hair flaxen ; if not completely beautiful, her face was too interesting not to be considered, by all who saw her, as very pretty. Her mind was highly cultivated ; enthusiastic to a fault, she felt disappointed if every one did not enter into her feelings ; she was unaffected and unassuming ; her talents, if they fell short of her cousin's, were good, and she always accomplished by perseverance and industry whatever she undertook. She was most devotedly attached to Mrs. Villiers, whose every wish was the law of her affectionate niece. Such were the two interesting beings, to whose education Mrs. Villiers had dedicated her whole time and attention, and to whose affectionate endearments she was indebted for most of the happy hours she had enjoyed during her residence at the cottage.

CHAPTER III.

“Are you ready, my dears?” asked Mrs. Villiers, as she opened the school-room door, at the appointed hour.

“Yes, mamma, quite ready,” they both exclaimed, “and we will not keep you a moment:” so off they flew to equip themselves for their walk. Mrs. Villiers watched their light movements with feelings more easily to be imagined than described. “Happy, happy age,” she mentally ejaculated, “when every pain is quickly forgotten, when every feeling of the heart is pure and unalloyed, and youth looks only to the brightest side of life.” In a few minutes Mrs. Villiers and her young

companions set out on their walk. The morning was clear and fine, and all nature seemed to revive ; and a degree of cheerfulness, similar to the prospect around, animated the light heart of Caroline : gay and lively, she entertained her mother and cousin, as they walked towards the village, by her mirth, and excited more than one smile by her pertinent and lively observations.

Having visited some of the cottages where she was in the habit of distributing her well timed bounty, Mrs. Villiers proceeded to the post-office, to leave some letters which she had been writing that morning ; and as she passed the door of a small cottage, on her return, a loud scream attracted her attention, and on hastily opening the door to ascertain from what cause it

arose, she perceived a little boy of about six years of age lying on the floor, while the blood gushed from a severe cut in his forehead. Mrs. Villiers took him up in her arms, and finding him insensible, dispatched Caroline to a neighbour's for some water to wash his face. After this was done, she examined the wound, and thinking it better to bind it up ere he regained his senses, called Constance to her assistance. She came, indeed: but her trembling hands refused to obey her wishes, and hung useless by her side, as she called out, "ah! the poor child, how terribly he is hurt! he has cut his head—see how it is bleeding!" Always composed, and knowing there was nothing dangerous in the child's wound, Mrs. Villiers had just succeeded in binding it up when the little boy

opened his eyes, and uttering an exclamation of surprise, called out for his mother. Mrs. Villiers was endeavouring to pacify, and to satisfy him of her friendly intentions towards him, when turning to where Constance had been standing, what was her amazement at seeing her nearly fainting, and extended on the ground. Mrs. Villiers was considerably agitated, and hardly knew what was to be done: from this dilemma she was, however, happily relieved by the entrance of the little boy's mother; who, perceiving how she was engaged, burst into tears, saying, "My poor little Georgy, what has befallen him, madam?" Mrs. Villiers satisfied the good woman's anxiety; and committing her charge to the care of his mother, hastened to Constance, who soon recovered herself

sufficiently to leave the cottage. The child was perfectly sensible, and owned that he had fallen down, in reaching at a cup of milk which stood on a shelf in a corner of the room, though his mother had told him, before she went out, not to attempt to get it for fear of hurting himself. In a gentle manner Mrs. Villiers pointed out to him the disobedience he had been guilty of, and the punishment he had met with, by not minding the orders of his parent; then desiring to know how the little boy continued, and putting some money into the woman's hand, they departed, loaded with the grateful acknowledgments of the poor woman.

They walked forward in silence; and on reaching home, they found it was dinner time, at which meal, contrary to her usual custom, Mrs. Villiers

was silent and grave. When the cloth was removed, she addressed herself to Constance :

“ I am grieved, my dear girl, to see how little you have endeavoured to correct yourself of a fault, against which I have so often cautioned you, and how little you appear to have profited by my frequent remonstrances : one too, my love, which instead of rendering you useful to society, will make you a burthen to your friends. Sensibility, when regulated by good sense, and guided by the dictates of religion, is a virtue which every one ought to possess ; but when, from a too great self-indulgence, it exceeds the bounds which reason and propriety have laid down, it degenerates (to give it the most lenient term) into

folly ; and in a young person, it is one of a most dangerous kind ; one which, under the too seducing name of refined feeling, often conceals affectation, and is made a mere pretence of humanity. I know you too well, my dearest Constance, to suspect you of either art or disingenuousness : but this will not be the case with the world in general ; and not only your future happiness, but, in truth, your general usefulness in your allotted station of life, demand the utmost exertion on your part to restrain this too great tenderness of your natural disposition. At a future period, when I am laid in my grave, you may remember what I have now said to you, and how strongly I have urged you, my dearest child, to subdue, what in your more advanced

years will be a source of misery to you and those about you. We must not grieve for the misfortunes of others as if they directly were our own, nor witness an accident without promptly endeavouring to alleviate the sufferings it has occasioned. In my opinion, there is a greater want of real sensibility displayed by persons of this character, than those whose self-command enables them to assist, and feel for a suffering fellow-creature, by one and the same impulse. To-day you harassed my feelings by an unnecessary display of your own; for when I perceived you had fainted, you can hardly imagine how astonished I was at the sight; but, Constance, though in this village you have few opportunities of shewing your extreme sen-

sibility, yet when you mix in the world, it will so often be called forth, that it will eventually become a fixed habit, unless you use unwearied assiduity to conquer it in infancy.”

“ I will never, again, grieve you by the repetition of a scene of similar weakness,” was the reply of Constance, “ and I promise to use my utmost endeavours for the future, to make myself all that you, my ever kind friend, could wish me to become ;” and the weeping girl flew into the now open arms of her attached aunt.

“ Do so, my love : my earnest prayers will soon be poured forth for your happiness ; and, under the blessing of the Almighty, you need not despair of complete success in correcting this and every other failing which might render

your future life less amiable, engaging, and beneficent, than my fond hopes lead me to anticipate. I am now going to my room, and shall bid you good bye for the present ;” and Mrs. Villiers immediately quitted the apartment.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME days had elapsed since the foregoing conversation between Mrs. Villiers and Constance. The former looked anxiously forward to receiving an answer to a letter which she had written to her youngest sister Lady Juliet, on reading the account of her father's accident, for whose situation she was much alarmed. Her feelings were confined to her own bosom, for neither Caroline or Constance were aware they had a grandfather living, and were unacquainted with many parts of Mrs. Villiers' former life. Many circumstances had induced her to conceal it from her daughter. Caroline, high-spirited and energetic, disliked the sameness of

the life she led, and looked forward to the return of her uncle and aunt, as the period when the scene would be varied.

In the course of the morning Mrs. Villiers, attended by the girls, walked to the village, and visited the cottage of a poor woman whose daughter was dying. They found her a little better; and on her expressing a wish that Mrs. Villiers should read and pray by her, she willingly complied; but not wishing to confine the girls to the impure air of a sick room, she sent them home, promising to follow them as soon as she was able. After passing some time with the invalid, Mrs. Villiers bent her steps to the post-office, and was informed that a letter for her had been sent to the cottage. Fatigued and anxious, she reached home and went im-

mediately up stairs to take off her walking dress. She perceived a packet lying on the table: "From India!" exclaimed Mrs. Villiers. Her hand trembled as she broke the seal, and a shade of disappointment passed across her features. Enclosed she found a letter for Constance, and one for herself. It announced that Lord Ennerdale's health was much improved, and his and Lady Ennerdale's arrival might be expected in the course of two months, and expressed her Ladyship's great anxiety to return to England, as the climate of India had not agreed with her health; and concluded by reiterating an earnest wish, very soon to embrace her beloved sister and her two charges. This was the substance of Lady Ennerdale's letter, which conveyed mingled sensations of joy and sorrow to the

heart of Mrs. Villiers. Having perused it, Mrs. Villiers sent for the girls, and gave Constance her mother's letter. This intelligence communicated a lively throb to the bosom of the animated Caroline; for to this event she looked forward with no little satisfaction.

“Then in two months I shall leave you, my dearest aunt,” said Constance, “to take up my abode with strangers, for such my father and mother will be to me.”

“I trust you may,” replied Mrs. Villiers, coldly.

“Ah, then you will be glad when the time arrives!” sorrowfully answered Constance: “it will soon be here.”

Mrs. Villiers saw a tear struggling in her eye; she held out her hand, and said in an impressive voice, “my dear

Constance, the loss will be mine; believe me, I feel anxious to introduce my pupil to her parents." At this remark, Mrs. Villiers could not command her feelings, for she fondly loved Constance, unconsciously to herself, better perhaps than Caroline: their dispositions suited each other; a shade of melancholy tinged the minds of both; and a degree of enthusiasm and romance still marked the character of the gentle and amiable Mrs. Villiers. Constance left the room soon after, and in the solitude of her own chamber gave way in thought to the bitterness of parting with so attached a friend. She felt the propriety of schooling her own heart to the great change which was about to take place, and fervently did she pray for fortitude; and determined however, poig-

nant her sufferings, to spare her beloved aunt the pain of knowing them.

From these bitter reflections she was roused by the entrance of Caroline, who came to tell her some dresses were brought for their inspection, and begged her to come and see them. Constance made a successful effort to recover herself, and they left the room together; on reaching Mrs. Villiers' dressing-room, that lady told them the frocks were laid in the breakfast parlour, and putting five guineas into the hands of Constance, said, "you do not, my love, require in general to be expensively attired, but on the occasion for which this dress is wanted, I wish you to appear as the daughter of Lord and Lady Ennerdale."

Constance kissed the hand she held,

and was hurried away by her lively cousin to inspect the dresses.

“Oh, Constance! here is a beauty!” said Caroline, displaying a thin muslin of rich Moravian work, and trimmed with lace.

“Do you think so?” replied her cousin; “then ask my aunt, and she will let you have it.”

“Not for the world,” quickly rejoined Caroline; “it is too fine and too dear for me,” she gaily added, as she gave one more glance at the beautiful dress before she laid it down; “but, do you buy it;” saying which, she left the room.

“What is the price of this gown?” said Constance.

“Three guineas, ma’am,” answered Mrs. Simpson, the mantua-maker.

Constance considered for a few mo-

ments, and the result of her reflections was the purchasing the gown in question, and one similar to it, for herself and Caroline; having settled for them, she hastened up stairs, anxious to keep it a secret from Caroline till the day following, when they were to be worn at a private and juvenile ball, which was to be given in celebration of the birthday of a young friend, with whose family they were very intimate.

Louisa Beverley was the chosen friend of Constance and Caroline: she was amiable, and half idolized by her parents.

Next morning by daybreak the two girls were up, as they were to breakfast at the park, where Louisa had engaged their assistance in finishing some of the ornamental parts necessary for the approaching fête.

“ It is seven o’clock,” said Caroline: “ we ought to get our things ready to set off. We promised Louisa to be with her by eight, and it is full two miles to the park : I will go and see if our things are ready.”

“ They are all ready, and prepared for our departure,” replied Constance, “ and we have no need to wait till my aunt rises, for she told us not to disturb her.”

“ Ah, that is very true; mamma was right as she always is, and we had better lose no more time.” Constance agreed, and they set off together, accompanied by a female servant. Mrs. Villiers intended joining them at dinner.

The sun beamed gently on the surrounding country; hardly a breath of wind disturbed the leaves, and the

young ladies took the road to Beverly Park, along the sea-shore ; an unruffled sea, on which the sun darted his varied and brilliant coloured rays ; the coast of Wales added new beauty to the scene ; not a noise was heard except the merry laugh of the haymakers from the top of a neighbouring cliff, whose rugged and uneven sides formed a striking and pleasing contrast with its cultivated summit.

Leaving the shore, the girls entered the large plantations adjoining the park. This large extent of wood was varied from the pale hue of the lime and ash, to the darker green of the place of their destination ; and Caroline, struck with the peculiar beauty and richness of the prospect, called upon Constance to admire it.

To the east lay a large extent of

cultivated country; to the west the wood before mentioned; on the south a view of the Park, from the chimnies of which the smoke curled up in graceful columns to the sky, and at a little distance the majestic ocean formed an ever-varying object from the windows of the mansion, which was built in an elegant style of modern architecture.

After having admired the view for some time, Constance took out her watch; “How very long we have been walking, it is a quarter past eight!”

“Is it possible!” exclaimed Caroline, “then let us make haste;” and they proceeded with all imaginable expedition to the house, where they found their friend impatiently expecting their arrival. The morning passed

rapidly away, and they were surprised to find it dinner time, ere they thought it was half gone. They had been principally engaged in dressing bouquets of flowers, and selecting from the greenhouse such plants as were either remarkable for their beauty or fragrance, to ornament the apartments with, which were to be decorated to the amusements of the evening. On entering the drawing-room, they found Mrs. Villiers and a large party assembled. After dinner, they all adjourned to the duties of the toilette. Constance enjoyed all the pleasure of knowing it was now in her power to gratify one of the beings whom she loved the best in the world, and the consciousness of it gave unusual animation to her countenance. It is impossible to describe the feelings of these two amiable girls; their mu-

tual satisfaction, and it would be difficult to decide which felt the most pleasure, the grateful Caroline or the gratified and delighted Constance. Mrs. Villiers felt at that moment how deeply she should regret the loss of a girl, who was capable of performing an action at once so generous and amiable.

“You will be a friend to my poor Caroline when I am no more,” thought she, and a tear glistened in her eye, as she gazed with affection on the two dear objects before her.

Louisa Beverly now summoned them from the toilettes back to the drawing-room, where most of the young people were assembled. The ball passed off like most other balls, on which it would be needless to enlarge, as most of our readers have experienced the pleasure of such amusements,

and we will leave it to them to imagine what were the anticipations of Constance and Caroline upon this occasion.

Constance was amused, Caroline delighted ; the former was more formed to shine in a domestic circle, than in an intercourse with the gay and the dissipated ; her character required to be known, in order to its being admired and loved as it deserved. She was not partial to dancing, but when she was led to the instrument (for music filled up the intervals of dancing for those who were fatigued), her rapid and brilliant execution, the taste with which she played, united to a voice uncommonly sweet, excited universal admiration. A desire to please and gratify Mrs. Villiers got the better of her natural timidity, and half the mammas in

the room heard her with envy, though not without bestowing the loudest plaudits on her performance.

Caroline, passionately fond of dancing, wound the giddy mazes of the dance with so much grace and animation, that her light and elegant figure resembled that of a sylph. She saw daybreak untired and still delighted; at length the young party separated, some to return home, but the greater number were to remain till the next day.

Caroline and the lively Louisa having gained the permission of their parents, retired to their rooms, altered their dresses, and took a ramble through the grounds.

Thus rapidly passed the day and night, which the cousins had anticipated with so much pleasure for nearly

two months. The following day they bid adieu to Louisa and her kind parents, and quitted Beverly Park ; and on returning to the cottage again, pursued their usual avocations.

CHAPTER V.

THE plan of education which Mrs. Villiers pursued was regular. She taught both the girls French, Italian, and Drawing ; but they were instructed in music by the best master to be procured in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Villiers herself played well on the piano-forte, and was partial to the accomplishment ; but she soon found that it would occupy more than could be spared of her time, were she herself to give them as much instruction in this science as they would require : she therefore delegated this part of their instruction to another. Caroline's forte was drawing, and Constance excelled in music.

Added to these now almost necessary branches of education, Mrs. Villiers cultivated in their minds a correct taste for literature. At this period they were both well acquainted with the best and most elegant works of the modern as well as ancient authors, and Caroline and her cousin were early led to consider the lighter works of imagination as mere amusement, and the reading of them as an occasional reward of some meritorious conduct.

They rose early ; and before they began their studies, Mrs. Villiers assembled her family to prayers : and they concluded the day with the same sacred exercise of devotion. Brought up with a deep sense of their duty to the great and bountiful giver of all good things, Caroline and Constance were, from their infancy, taught the

propriety of submitting with resignation to the will of God, as the great rule of their actions. Mrs. Villiers' deep afflictions had directed her wounded spirit to seek for the comforts of religion, which now for many years had been her only support and consolation. In childhood, except when she attended at public worship, she never heard the subject named; for she had the misfortune, at the early age of four years, to lose her excellent mother Lady Melrose; whose confirmed piety and correct judgment would have been of the greatest advantage to her and her sisters. In her dying moments she committed the children to the care of their father, who promised to watch over their health and improvement with all a parent's attention. This promise he ful-

filled as well as he was able ; but still they were left much under the care of servants ; and it was not till after Mrs. Villiers' imprudent marriage, that she ever seriously reflected on the full extent of her religious duties. Affliction had wrought in her mind a happy change ; and it was her daily and most delightful employment to instil the same principles of piety, benevolence, and resignation into the hearts of her pupils.

Till one o'clock, they were constantly engaged with their routine of studies : after that hour, when the weather permitted, they walked or amused themselves out of doors. In summer, they derived fresh delight in the elegant pursuit of botany ; and in the winter, they either worked a little in their garden, when it was not too se-

vere, or they wandered about in the beautiful walks which surrounded their dwelling. In these excursions Mrs. Villiers usually accompanied them, when her health permitted. Not one moment of the day was allowed to be spent in idleness : for she had early impressed upon their minds, that idleness was a sinful and dangerous habit, which becomes more seducing from indulgence, and which acquires daily greater power over its pitiable victims. She encouraged every thing that either contributed to their amusement, or increased the number of their pursuits : for nothing is so effectual a preventive of *ennui* as constant employment.

Mrs. Villiers saw little company, and hardly ever mixed in the society of her neighbours ; yet the days passed rapidly away with the inhabitants of

the cottage, in an uninterrupted series of tranquil enjoyments. The two months had now nearly expired which were to terminate Constance's residence with her aunt. Mrs. Villiers was gratified to observe, that she no longer expressed any dread or sorrow at the idea of accompanying her parents to Ennerdale Castle ; and though in secret her fond aunt sighed, to think she was going to lose one who was become so very dear to her, yet her affection for Constance prevented her giving way to her feelings : indeed she purposely saw very little of her niece ; for when, by any chance, they were left alone together, Mrs. Villiers generally made some pretence of business for leaving the room.

Lord and Lady Ennerdale were now daily expected by Mrs. Villiers, who,

for every thing but losing her neice, looked forward to their arrival with heartfelt delight. Her health had latterly become so delicate, that she secretly entertained but little hope of recovery—the least degree of over-exertion disabled her from moving, or confined her to the bed; and any sudden exposure to the air occasioned a return of her symptomatic cough. The pleasure of knowing that her darling child would have a fond and eligible protectress in her aunt, a comfortable home at Lord Ennerdale's, and a most attached friend in her cousin, had almost reconciled her mind to the idea of quitting this world.

Constance's gentle temper was well suited to the humbled and unassuming mind of Mrs. Villiers, and more congenial to her feelings than the more

arrogant and spirited disposition of her own daughter, which occasionally displayed itself at those unguarded moments, when the real character, however softened by the restraints of education and example, is still discerned by the watchful eye of parental affection. Mrs. Villiers, at this time, determined on informing Constance of the circumstances of her own history, and that Lord Melrose was her father: in all her attempts to hear of his health from her own relations she had been cruelly disappointed, as no letter had arrived from Lady Juliet; and, except through the medium of the papers, which announced his perfect recovery, she had received no news whatever of her still dear and beloved father. The first morning she and Constance were left alone together,

after she had come to this resolution, Mrs. Villiers begged of Constance, who was leaving the room, to resume her chair at the table ; and then, in an agitated manner, she recited to her niece the principal events of her past life ; at the same time requesting her not to repeat them, for the present, to the gay and volatile Caroline. Constance was much surprised at this restriction, and requested to know why her cousin was to be kept in ignorance of her eventful story.

“ Because, Constance, she has little chance of ever seeing, or being noticed by my father during my life time ; and you know how much she is fascinated with the charms of rank, and the unreal happiness of worldly affluence. She might, perhaps, regard me with no very cordial eye, as being the

cause of her estrangement from her family. I dare not run the risk of her reflecting upon me, even by a look, for my past disobedience ; and though, perhaps, I could not greatly condemn her, after having set her such an example, yet it would be hard, very hard to endure from a beloved child ! Oh, my Constance ! deeply have I felt this imprudent step. While my husband lived, I made many excuses to myself for a conduct, which I have since found to have been highly culpable. He, by his uniform kindness, lulled my conscience to rest, and soothed me with his tenderness. It pleased the God of all mercies to remove my Villiers from me ! How deeply on his death-bed did he repent at having offended his father ! He meant not to afflict me ; but each

word he uttered stung me to the heart.” Here Mrs. Villiers paused ; and clasping her hands convulsively together, she was for some minutes silent. Constance, not daring to interrupt her aunt, and herself dissolved in tears, knelt down beside her. Mrs Villiers, restored at length to a more composed tone of mind, added with a deep sigh, “ I have done wrong in thus allowing my feelings to get the better of my reason—at some future time we will renew the conversation ; but for the present leave me, my beloved Constance : I will send for you again, ere long, but remember your promise.”

Mrs. Villiers cherished in her bosom the fond image of her lamented husband ; her grief was deep and silent, and rarely did she give way to those vain regrets, which she knew, both as

a Christian and a parent, it was her duty to conquer. This habit of self-control gave composure to her manner, and at length fortified her mind; and time, as it rolled on in its ceaseless course, had obliterated, in some degree, the bitter recollections of the past.

When Constance and Caroline joined Mrs. Villiers, no traces of emotion was discernible on her calm and pallid cheek: she was composed, but evidently much exhausted in her spirits, and this evening she retired to her apartment at an earlier hour than usual.

The following afternoon, when dinner was over, Mrs. Villiers turned to Caroline, and requested her to go to the village, as she did not herself feel equal to the walk.

“I wish you to take these clothes to Ellen Brown. Constance, my love, will you accompany Caroline?”

She immediately agreed to do so; and Caroline added,—

“Suppose then that we are quickly on the move; for those clouds to the west portend rain, I think.”

“*Adieu pour le présent, ma chère mamma,*” as she imprinted a kiss on the fair and polished forehead of her mother, and gaily tripped out of the room. Constance followed, and Mrs. Villiers went to her own little dressing-room, where she took up a book: but had scarcely been reading for more than half an hour, when her maid entered.

“A letter, madam, from my Lady Ennerdale. One of her Ladyship’s servants is just come forward to say,

that my Lord and Lady will be here in an hour."

Mrs. Villiers' cheek changed from the brightest tint of the carnation to the pale hue of the lily, and her varying colour spoke the inward emotions of her mind. She held out her hand and took the letter, and told Maria to leave her for a few minutes, when she would give the necessary directions. She then opened the letter, and read as follows :

"MY DEAR EMILY:—I can hardly
" describe my feelings at being once
" more in England, and within a few
" miles of all most dear to me in this
" world. While I write, my hand
" almost refuses to guide my pen.
" Believe me, my own sister, I shall
" ever feel the deepest gratitude for
" the affection and tenderness you

“ have shewn to my child. May she
“ as deeply feel the obligations she
“ owes you, as her mother does.—
“ Farewell. In a few short hours I
“ shall again be with my much-loved,
“ much-valued sister.

“ CAROLINE ENNERDALE.”

Mrs. Villiers perused with mixed sensations of joy and grief, the letter of her beloved Caroline. Her mind reverted back to the last time of their meeting, and to all that had since occurred, and a bitter sigh stole from her bosom. I have much to be thankful for, she mentally ejaculated; and her agitation found relief in tears. She for some time remained fixed to the spot, where she first received the information of her sister's arrival; for she almost dreaded communicating it to Constance — her heart yielded itself up

to many fears respecting the future welfare of that dear and much-loved girl. But Mrs. Villiers possessed a strength of mind that never permitted the indulgence of any grief to interfere with the line of duty she had marked out ; and in this instance, she held it to be imperiously her duty to restrain her own feelings, and to prepare her niece for a different, a very different line of life, from that in which she had hitherto been accustomed to move. She pondered long on the best means of reconciling Constance to her apparently happy lot, for such it certainly was.

She then remembered, it would be necessary to send for the girls ; and rising from her chair to give orders to that purpose, she perceived them walking leisurely in the garden, at no great

distance from the window. Caroline was laughing, and a faint smile animated the face of Constance. Mrs. Villiers gazed for a moment on the light and graceful form, the sweet and gentle countenance of her beloved niece. Her limbs trembled, her voice faltered, as she waved her hand to call them in. She herself went down stairs to meet them, as she feared the servants, out of their inconsiderate joy, might prematurely disclose to Constance the news of her parents' speedy approach.

She expressed an unusual degree of pleasure at their return; when both, with one accord, exclaimed,—

“My dear mamma, how pale you look, are you ill?”

“No, my loves; but go, Constance, into the drawing-room. Caroline must come up stairs with me: but

we will be back to you in a few minutes."

On communicating to her daughter the intelligence she had received, joy sparkled in the bright eyes of Caroline.

"Oh! how delighted I am! My dear uncle and aunt! May I go and tell Constance?"

"No, my dear, that office must be mine. To meet with becoming marks of affection those parents, from whom your cousin has been separated for so many years, requires some previous preparation, and to be called to pay unlimited obedience to the will of a person, to whom she is yet a stranger, would excite fear in a firmer heart than that which our dear Constance is possessed of. I will leave you now,

my love, to impart the information to her.' So saying, Mrs. Villiers quitted the room, and hastening down, found Constance quietly seated at her work, in her usual window-seat in the drawing-room.

CHAPTER VI.

“CONSTANCE, you tell me that you love me, and that my happiness is dear to you as your own. I am now come to prove the strength of your affection.” Constance turned pale, and Mrs. Villiers was agitated; but making an effort to recover herself, she thus proceeded: “I am ill, my love, and weak, and agitated by some information I have just received; it concerns you more than it does me, and on you depends my comfort: by your fortitude you may spare my feelings any further anxiety about your welfare. The intelligence ought to give you pleasure—in a word, your parents are arrived in England.”

No sigh, no tear stole from the eyes of Constance; she received the news in silence: the only emotion that was visible, was the deadly paleness which overspread her face. Mrs. Villiers saw with pleasure, that the news did not appear to excite any violent feelings of distress, and she then proceeded to acquaint her, that in less than an hour Lord and Lady Ennerdale might be expected at the cottage. Constance started from her seat, and threw her arms around Mrs. Villiers' neck, without uttering a word. For two or three minutes the silence was uninterrupted; at length, her aunt broke it, by saying, "Constance, I had prepared myself to expect more affection, more tenderness, and more consideration from one of your character; I am disappointed; I am deceived in

the ideas I had formed of you. I have constantly stifled my own sorrows, in order to contribute to your improvement and amusement; this want of exertion on your part is more than I can bear. I must leave you, for other duties claim my attention ;” then disengaging herself from the arms of Constance—“when next we meet,” she said, “I shall expect to see you restored to composure.”

Constance looked at her with earnestness : “Is it possible,” she exclaimed, “my aunt can think I do not love her too well, to be guilty of making her unhappy about me? Oh, forgive me, my dear, tender friend, forgive one whose affection for you makes her ungrateful; restore me to your confidence, and I will prove myself worthy of it from this moment. I

will make it my study to love and obey my parents." Overcome by her own emotion, she would have fallen, had not Mrs. Villiers caught her; she pressed her to her bosom, and shed tears of mingled tenderness and gratitude on the head of this darling girl.

After making a few more inquiries, Constance retired to dress; and, for the first time in her life, felt solicitude as to her appearance. She begged to be allowed to remain alone till the arrival of her father and mother.

One half hour seemed to pass away on leaden wings, to the anxious heart of Mrs. Villiers, who with eager and listening ear attended to every noise. What she was—what she had been—recurred to her thoughts with something like a feeling of disappointment. She paced up and down the drawing

room with unequal steps ; and sometimes, subdued by her feelings, burst into tears : much she wished, but dared not trust herself to see Constance.

Caroline was too happy in her own excited hopes, to be able to enter into any of her mother's feelings ; and she alone, of the party, looked forward with unalloyed delight to the arrival of Lord and Lady Ennerdale. Though fifteen years had elapsed since they parted, which period effects a great change in every one, yet Mrs. Villiers expected to see the same beautiful Lady Caroline Melrose whom she remembered at eighteen.

The rattle of wheels had long vibrated on the ears of the watchful Caroline ; and a carriage was just in sight, when she descended to her mother, whom she found standing at

the window : scarcely had she entered the room, when the carriage drove to the door ; and in one moment the sisters were in each other's arms.

After the first embrace, Mrs. Villiers conducted Lady Ennerdale to the drawing-room, where she had time to survey her sister's appearance ; the elegant lightness of a girlish figure was matured to the graceful step of the matron, and the youthful beauty of her face was softened to sweetness ; no other change was visible in Lady Ennerdale.

She received the blooming Caroline with the greatest kindness and affection ; and whispered to Mrs. Villiers, as she ceased embracing her niece :

“ Ah ! Emily, if Constance does but resemble Caroline, she will be all I can desire.”

Mrs. Villiers smiled, and told Caroline to call her cousin : a few minutes passed, and Mrs. Villiers' agitation was extreme ; she herself left the room, but almost immediately returned, attended by Constance : she took her by the hand, and led her up to Lady Ennerdale.

“ Here, dearest Caroline, is your child, may she prove as great a blessing to you as she has done to me.”

Constance spoke not, but gracefully bending at the feet of her mother, waited for her to speak. Lady Ennerdale raised her in her arms, pressed the trembling Constance to her bosom, and kissed her forehead ; then leading her to a chair, seated herself beside her.

A short silence ensued, which was broken by the entrance of Lord Ennerdale.

“ Oh ! here is my uncle,” said Caroline, rising to meet him : he took her hand, and smilingly desired her to introduce Constance to him. She had risen at the approach of her father : the colour forsook her cheek as she gazed at the tall haughty figure of her father ; and the expression of pride which marked his face. He received her with more kindness than Mrs. Villiers expected ; but the reserved coldness of his manner evidently struck a chill to the too susceptible heart of his daughter. Constance turned from him to her mother, who held out her hand towards the trembling girl.

“ Go to your father, Constance ; you must not forget, my Lord, that she is not accustomed to fashionable manners.”

“ Well, Constance,” said Lord En-

nerdale, "I have not been used to be called papa, but you will teach me, my child."

"I hope," said Constance, a tear starting in her eye, "I shall never teach you to dislike the name of father."

"I am sure you will not," said he, kindly pressing her hand; "the account Lady Emily has given both Lady Ennerdale and myself of you, incline us to love you with all the affection you can desire."

Caroline was surprised; and even Constance started, at hearing Mrs. Villiers addressed by a title to which they were both strangers. She shook her head at Lord Ennerdale when he spoke to her: but both he and Lady Ennerdale insisted on her resuming a title, to which she had such an unde-

niable right, for her daughter's sake. Mrs. Villiers (or, as we shall hereafter call her, Lady Emily) was spared further remonstrance on that point by dinner being announced. She proceeded with her guests to the dining-room. When the girls were left alone, Caroline said—

“ Oh ! Constance, how I envy you such parents ; but how odd of my uncle to call mamma Lady Emily ! ”

“ All Earls' daughters are ladies in their own right,” rejoined Constance ; “ but my aunt resigned that appellation after her marriage.”

“ How disagreeable ; but I will tease her into being a lady again. But was my grandfather an Earl ? I wish I had known it before, I should have been so proud of being his granddaughter.”

“ Perhaps, Caroline, my aunt did

not think you needed any more ideas of consequence : at some future time I will tell you more particulars ;” then disengaging herself from her cousin, she left the room.

The evening passed away more pleasantly than might have been expected. Constance was treated, both by her father and mother, with extreme kindness and attention. She was, however, thankful when the hour of retiring to rest arrived ; but reflections on her future prospects prevented her sleeping.

After breakfast the following morning, when all the party were assembled, Lord Ennerdale took Lady Emily by the hand, and said—

“ We are come, my dear sister, for by that name you must allow me to address you, to take Constance home.

Lady Ennerdale joins me in begging that you and Caroline will accompany us. I see that look bodes no good to my request ; but it would not be kind to leave Constance with perfect strangers ; and such I see, by her eyes, she considers us : come now, I insist—for once I will be positive.”

Lady Emily raised her dark blue eyes to the face of her brother and sister, and impressively replied :

“ Ennerdale, I cannot but feel the kindness of your wishing me to accompany you to the castle, but the state of my health is a bar to my leaving home. Caroline may go, but I cannot.” Tears started in Lady Ennerdale’s eyes as she attentively gazed on the wan cheek and altered form of this dear sister. She said—

“ Where, my Emily, will you be so

tenderly watched over as in our house?" Lady Emily requested the girls to leave the room for the present, as she wished to speak to her sister alone. They obeyed, and in a low and tremulous voice thus addressed her beloved Caroline :

“ I have both longed for and dreaded this interview ; it is now come, and I will neither deceive myself or you with false hopes. I am dying of a lingering but a flattering disease. I see by your looks you are not surprised : there is only one tie which makes me still wish to live—my child, and to obtain my father's forgiveness would comprize my every wish on earth. For my Caroline I would entreat your love and affection, when her mother is laid in her last narrow abode—think not, my love, I fear to die, I trust, I hope

through the merits of a blessed Saviour, we shall meet again in a world of bliss, ‘ where moths do not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.’ Religion has been my only support, it has carried me through all the vicissitudes of this world, and by its aid I hope to die, and obtain that blessed state of eternal rest, to which we all look forward. My faults have been many, but I repent of them most sincerely : my earnest prayers are daily offered up for my father : may he be happy ; tell him, dearest Caroline, that his loving daughter will in her last moments offer up prayers of contrite sorrow for having offended him.” She paused, and then added : “ for Constance I have no fears, she will prove worthy of your love, be your comfort, and your pride ; her character is form-

ed: no seducing images of rank or riches will change her from what she is; but you must guard her from the rough and stormy scenes of life, as a rare exotic is preserved from every change of temperature, or her fragile form will bend to the tempest. Caroline is too giddy and too volatile, not to require the watchful hand of some kind friend, to guide the inexperienced bark, which, left to itself, would soon sink among the billows that surround it; in you, my sister, she will find that friend: you will, for her mother's sake, pardon and correct her errors, and look with tenderness on her faults. Oh promise me, grant me this request," she added, with convulsive quickness, and pressing Lady Ennerdale's hands closely in her own. "I do promise it most solemnly, both for Lord Ennerdale and

myself," cried her afflicted sister, speaking through her tears.

Lady Emily dropped the hand she held; her head sunk on the sofa where she was sitting, and she faintly articulated, "Then I die in peace." She spoke no more for a few minutes, and Lady Ennerdale gazed with an agony of grief on her pale and interesting countenance; her eyes had lost none of their brilliancy, while their almost glassy brightness, and the hectic on her cheek, were but too certain indications of the disease, which by degrees was preying on the frame of Lady Emily, and which, though it increased her original beauty, was hourly consuming her strength, and was hurrying her by rapid strides to the silent tomb.

After she had a little recovered from the fatigue of speaking, Lady Emily

raised her head, and in a low voice said, "my dear sister, I ought not to have troubled you with this conversation to-day, but I feared I might be unequal to it on another." Lady Ennerdale replied, she was glad she had done so, as she trusted all her wishes were now gratified.

The girls were again summoned to the parlour, and the remainder of the day passed off in pleasing conversation; and Lady Emily appeared to have been relieved of a heavy weight on her mind, and was unusually cheerful.

CHAPTER VII.

LORD Ennerdale was obliged to take his leave of the party at the cottage on the following day, as business of importance required his presence in London; but the declining state of Lady Emily's health induced her sister to remain with her till some decisive turn, for the better or the worse, should take place. This intention had given the most lively pleasure to the poor invalid, and had communicated a glow of satisfaction to the heart of Constance, who appeared to regard the not leaving her aunt at this time as a reprieve from all that was terrible.

That no means might be left untried

to save the life of Lady Emily, a consultation was held of the most eminent medical men in the county; but of her recovery they gave little hope. Lady Ennerdale thought it right to communicate this intelligence to the two girls, and thus, by cautious means, prepare them for the much to be dreaded event.

One day Lady Emily was confined to her bed, and on the next was perhaps well enough to bear a short airing in Lady Ennerdale's carriage. In this state of fluctuation she had lingered for nearly three months, attended and nursed by her sister, Constance and Caroline, with the most unremitting affection. Constance, indeed, never left her night or day, unless she was forced from the chamber. A sudden feeling of despair had seized her,

on first hearing that she was so soon to lose this dear and justly valued friend; but religion, which is sure to soften every blow, taught her to submit with patient acquiescence to the calamity, which no human aid could avert: and Lady Emily's own perfect calmness and resignation added much to the comfort of all about her. Every succeeding day her strength was almost perceptibly diminished: but not a fretful expression ever escaped her lips. It was become painful to her to join a conversation, but many hours were employed by her affectionate nurses in reading to her on the subjects best adapted to fortify her mind for the approaching crisis.

Constance saw, with an agony which she could scarce suppress, the spasmodic contortions which pain occa-

sioned in the beautiful and placid face of her aunt, who observing her anxiety, said, “ my Constance, I am not now in pain, and I shall soon be released from all further suffering.” She then held out her almost transparent hand, which Constance bathed with her tears, and continued weeping without control.

“ How shall I bear to lose you, my much loved friend, and not pray to be restored to you soon again?”—“ My love, you have a fond mother to attend to,” said Lady Emily, “ be kind to poor Caroline for my sake ; may heaven shed on this dear head as many blessings as fall to the lot of mortals ! Oh ! may you be blessed,” she exclaimed with increasing energy, “ for your boundless attention and love towards me !”

Constance rose up and threw her arms around the emaciated form of the dear invalid. At this moment Lady Ennerdale entered.

“I am come to remain for sometime with your aunt, dear Constance. The day is fine and inviting, and I much wish that you would go into the garden.”

“Do go, my love, said Lady Emily. I am going to lay down, and shall want no attendance.”

Constance reluctantly obeyed; but on her return she perceived that her aunt had sunk into a kind of stupor; and found, on inquiry, that she had never spoken since she left her.

This was the mode in which the physicians expected her life would terminate, and anxiously did Constance gaze upon her face, and listen by

turns to her faint and almost imperceptible breathing.

Towards eight o'clock Lady Emily awoke, and expressed herself as feeling rather better; and, by her own desire, she was dressed, and placed on the sofa by the fire-side.

Soon afterwards the noise of a carriage was heard, and the door-bell rang; but Lady Emily did not appear to notice it. Lady Ennerdale rose from her seat, and made a sign to the girls not to notice her quitting the room. At the end of a quarter of an hour, passed by them in the most painful suspense, Lady Emily's maid entered, and told Caroline that she and Constance were wanted below stairs by their aunt Lady Ennerdale. With gentle steps they quitted the apartment, and were met at the bottom

of the stairs by her Ladyship. "A stranger is here, my dear Caroline, who has come to see your mother, who will probably be much agitated at the interview. Remain, therefore, here for a few minutes, when I myself will call you up to join our party."

The girls were much surprised, but acceded without a single question.

CHAPTER IX.

WE must now return to the sick room of Lady Emily Villiers. The stranger was conducted thither by Lady Ennerdale, and entered with slow and agitated steps: the invalid had sunk back on the sofa, into a gentle dose.

“My sister,”—said Lady Ennerdale—

“Oh! do not wake her,” uttered the stranger, “let me gaze on her altered face—my Emily! my child!”

“Who calls me by the name of child?” said she, half rising and turning her eyes vacantly round; “I thought my father called me, but that

cannot be : he would not hear my entreaties to be forgiven."

"I do forgive you, my poor injured Emily, from my heart ; and do you forgive me, whose unkindness to you was unintentional?"

Lady Emily gazed wildly round her—

"I do not dream ! that is my father's voice !"

"Yes, Emily, it is your father."

She sprung from the sofa and threw herself at his feet ; he caught her in his arms, urged her to be composed, and tenderly replaced her on her seat. But a chord was touched, that she thought had for ever ceased to vibrate, for exhausted nature seemed to revive ; a glow of pink mounted to her cheeks, and her friends feared for a moment that overpowered reason had fled its

seat. She forcibly clung round Lord Melrose, and her strength appeared to have returned in full force. As her father hung with anxiety over her still beautiful face, he felt his hopes revive; Lady Emily's eyes sparkled with animated pleasure, as she once more was embraced by her fond father.

Even Lady Ennerdale, flattering as she knew the complaint to be, felt surprised at the strength she still possessed, and the hope that she might still recover darted like a brilliant meteor before her sight. Animated by a thought so cheering, Lady Ennerdale, who dreaded a longer continuance of this scene, went in search of Caroline and Constance, as she wished to introduce them to their grandfather, and in a few words related to them what had passed.

To a heart possessed of every virtue, and a peculiarly active mind, her Ladyship added a firmness of decision which, even at the most distressing periods, never deserted her. On finding how anxiously her beloved sister pined for a reconciliation with her offended father, she had simply, but in pathetic language, described to him the particulars of Lady Emily's situation, and mentioned the many letters she had written to supplicate his pardon. This appeal had the desired effect: for Lady Melrose had been dead for some years, and the only obstacle was removed which could prevent the better qualities of his heart from exercising themselves, and Lady Ennerdale's letter was answered in person, as we have already related.

On her Ladyship's return to the

room, accompanied by her daughter and niece, Lady Emily was reclining on the sofa, her father's arms supporting her head ; she did not immediately perceive their entrance, and Lady Ennerdale advancing towards her father, and half smiling, said, in a cheerful voice :

“ My dear Sir, you must allow me to introduce to you two near relations, your granddaughters, ^{my} Caroline Villiers and Constance Granville.”

Caroline stood at a little distance ; but the mild eye of her grandfather, and his extending his hand towards her, overcame her fears, and she returned his embrace with affection ; but the bashful Constance was led to him by her mother : he received her with kindness, and imprinted a kiss on her pale cheek. Lady Ennerdale

gently pointed out to her sister the propriety of her retiring to bed, after so much fatigue and exertion as she had just gone through.

“ Yes, Caroline,” she said, in a weak voice, “ I will go to bed, but I shall never rise from it again.”

At that instant her cough returned with renewed violence, and she was borne to her bed in a state of almost insensibility.

Lord Melrose insisted on sitting up, and Lady Ennerdale was his companion ; they adjourned to Lady Emily’s dressing-room, but Caroline remained by the bed-side of her mother ; and, after much persuasion, Constance was prevailed upon to retire, and endeavour to procure some rest, as for nearly a week she had never laid down.

It was past midnight—Caroline had taken up a book : but her thoughts insensibly wandered from the subject—the maid who was in the room had fallen asleep, and she sat gazing intently on the figure of her mother; her breathing was faint and short. Lady Emily moved and extended her hand. Caroline's mind reverted to the time when that dear hand would be mouldering in the dust, when these lips, which had ever breathed kindness, and conveyed joy to her infant mind, would lose the power of utterance.

“What a friend I shall lose!” exclaimed she; “till now I never knew her value; how little have I deserved her love and affection!”

Then falling on her knees, she earnestly prayed for resignation to bear, without a murmur, the will of

heaven, and that she might so profit by the present affliction, that she might be permitted to join her mother in a better world. She pronounced this petition with earnestness, and half aloud: at its conclusion, she heard the faint voice of her parent; she arose—

“Caroline, I have heard your prayer; may it be granted. Do not mourn for me, my child; when it shall please God to remove me from this transitory scene, I am prepared, I trust, to die.”

These sentences were uttered at intervals, as weakness prevented her speaking more than a few words at once.

Caroline offered her something to drink: which she declined, and requested her sister might be called;

Caroline obeyed her, and in a few moments the anxious friends were assembled round her. A faint smile illumined Lady Emily's features, and seeing Lord Melrose, she put out her hand and made an effort to speak : but being unable, she gazed around her with a placid eye ; then recovering a little, said to Lady Ennerdale—

“ Caroline, farewell ! be kind to my orphan child ; remember me to Ennerdale, to all who inquire after me.”

She was then silent for a few minutes, and fixed her eyes on Constance and her daughter : no tears were shed by her afflicted relatives, all was silent : she then added—

“ Farewell, my children : my father, and my sister, my wishes in this world are gratified—I die in peace—may we all meet in heaven.”

She sunk back on her pillow : they thought that she had fainted, and the common applications were used, but without effect. When her afflicted friends found that she was gone for ever, Lord Melrose left the room under the agonized feelings of the deepest grief ; Constance sunk insensible on the bed, from whence she was removed to her own chamber.

Lady Ennerdale fell on her knees and fervently ejaculated—

“Oh, God ! grant that my death may be even such as her’s has been.”

Caroline continued standing by the bed-side of the departed saint, and kissing the cold and lifeless hand of her beloved parent. No tears came to her eyes ; no sobs choked her utterance. She moved not, she spoke not ; but remained contemplating the

ghastly hue of death, as it spread itself over the face of its still lovely victim.

Such was the death of Lady Emily Villiers : a knowledge of her God and Saviour had made her death happy and composed, and tranquilly, almost without a sigh or groan. Peaceful as the infant who sinks to sleep, she resigned herself to the God who made her.

On Lady Ennerdale's endeavouring to lead her niece from the chamber of death, she earnestly entreated to be suffered to remain a few minutes longer ; to reason with her was impossible, the extent of her loss she was as yet hardly sensible of ; her dear and lamented mother's death was an event she had long looked forward to : but that she was really dead, was a fatal

truth. Caroline's feelings and senses were almost stupified at the intelligence. Lady Ennerdale attempted not to contend with her, and left the room ; and, in a few minutes, sent her maid to beg Caroline would come to her. She returned a message to her aunt, requesting to be excused seeing her that night ; but promised to go to her own room, and endeavour to recruit her exhausted frame by going to bed. To compose herself to rest she found impossible, and as she paced up and down her room, her thoughts were wholly fixed upon her past and future prospects ; many hours she continued in this state of restless agitation, but considering that her own health, and, in part, the comfort of her aunt depended on her exertions, she threw herself on the bed : but sleep

refused to visit her eye-lids, and she watched with satisfaction the approaching day.

Caroline descended to the breakfast-room at the accustomed hour. Lady Ennerdale was there alone. What a change had taken place since that time yesterday ! Hope, though faint, then animated the sanguine heart of Caroline : it was now destroyed ; and as she reflected on all that had past, her grief increased ; but it was too deep and too profound to find relief in tears.

Her aunt received her with tenderness, and told her that Constance was still asleep, and her grandfather desired to take his breakfast in his own room. Caroline made an effort to say something : but her voice failed her, and the meal passed in silence. Lady

Ennerdale then repaired to Lord Melrose, and Caroline to the privacy of her own apartments.

It was six in the evening ere Constance awoke. At first she did not recollect what had happened, and seeing her mother, inquired after her aunt. Inexpressibly shocked, Lady Ennerdale burst into tears, and in a moment the truth flashed to her mind. She was much better prepared than her cousin for the event which had taken place: for from the commencement of Lady Emily's illness, she had never allowed herself to hope she would recover; the shock, therefore, was less severe to her than to Caroline, who always looked to the bright side of every thing. On the following day, Lady Ennerdale called the sorrowing girls to her, and thus addressed them:

“My loves, it is your grandfather’s wish that the funeral of my dear sister should take place at Melrose, and she is to be interred in the family vault there. Your father, my Constance, will be here to-day ; to-morrow Lord Melrose and he will begin their journey, and in the evening, dearest Caroline, you, Constance, and myself will leave this for Ennerdale Castle ; every thing will be prepared for our departure ; but if you have any directions to give, I advise you to do it soon. At present I am commissioned to conduct you to your grandpapa.”

Lady Ennerdale took an arm of each through hers, and went with them into the drawing-room, where they found Lord Melrose ; he received them both with great kindness, but particularly Caroline, and told her how happy he

would be if she would come and stay with him, either in Scotland or in London. She thanked him; but her unsubdued spirit revolted at the idea of being dependent on the bounty of her relations. She was now going to enter the world, an era she had looked forward to as the happiest period of her existence. How were her prospects changed! by one sad event she was a portionless orphan, and wholly dependant on the bounty of an uncle and aunt; to be considered as the humble companion of Constance. This was a thought so degrading to her high spirit, that any mode of subsistence by her own endeavours seemed, in her idea, to be the more preferable choice: such were the feelings of the moment as they rapidly impressed her mind; and then Caroline would upbraid her-

self for allowing such thoughts to return; and the uniform kindness and affectionate manners of her aunt would almost dispel the cloud. In the evening of this same day Lord Ennerdale arrived: at an early hour next morning, the hearse, which contained all that was mortal of Lady Emily Villiers, with two carriages, left the cottage. As they passed through the village, the principal part of the inhabitants joined the mournful cavalcade, and accompanied it for some miles, anxious to pay this last tribute of respect to one who had been by turns their friend, their benefactress, and their adviser. She had lived amongst them for fifteen years, beloved in life, and in death deeply regretted; numerous were the inquiries which were made daily, during her long illness,

and many the prayers and supplications offered up for her recovery ; but it pleased God to remove her from a world, which to her had been a scene of trial, and which she was fully prepared to leave.

May we all think of the time when we shall be summoned to the presence of our God ! May we live as though we walked before him, and make him and his commandments our great duty on earth. May we feel his goodness, long-suffering, and great mercy, and consider the immense debt of gratitude we owe to the Great Father of the Universe, who has so mercifully provided for our wants ; in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

CHAPTER IX.

LADY Ennerdale had purposely avoided telling the girls at what hour in the morning the funeral procession was to leave the cottage, as she was desirous of sparing them the additional distress which such a mournful scene would excite ; but Caroline's suspicions were not to be allayed by the studied answers that were made to her inquiries. In the evening she paid a farewell visit to the chamber of her beloved parent ; and as she viewed for the last time the features of her mother, placid even in death, her feelings, naturally strong, were roused to an agony of grief at the appalling

thought that she should no more on earth behold her only friend and protectress. Her mother's last words, "may we meet in heaven!" still vibrated on her ears, and imparted that comfort to her heart, which no worldly consolations could afford. Under the full conviction, that it depended only on herself to make their meeting again, in a better world, sure and beyond all doubt, she was enabled to leave the room, if not with composure, at least with tranquil confidence.

She threw herself on the bed; but, restless and unable to sleep, she listened to every passing noise; and it was not till five o'clock, when Caroline, from absolute exhaustion, had dropped into an uneasy dose, that the preparations for the removing of the body were fully arranged. The opening of

the hall-door, the low whispers of the attendants, and the slow tramping of the horses' hoofs, roused her from her state of stupor, and jumping up, she hastened to the window. Her heart sickened at the sight, and she fell backward, alike insensible to grief or pain. On recovering her senses, she again approached the window, whence she obtained a distant view of the procession, as it was slowly winding the ascent of a romantic hill, over which the course of the road lay. Her eyes eagerly watched every movement, and she sat with her face turned towards this single object of her thoughts, until the hearse finally disappeared from her sight. Nor did she even then move, till roused by the entrance of Lady Ennerdale, who was anxious to ascertain, whether she had been dis-

turbed. Yielding to her aunt's solicitations, she consented to retire to her bed; and, worn out by fatigue, she presently sunk to rest.

It was arranged, that Lady Ennerdale and the two girls should commence their journey in the course of the afternoon; and the latter had promised each other to use such self-command at quitting the scene of their early happiness and dearest recollections, as not to wound the affectionate heart of their tender and afflicted relative; and each of them had desired to be left alone till the moment of their departure.

The words "all is ready," sounded on the ears of Caroline as the signal for calling all her fortitude into action. She rose to obey the summons, and descending the stairs for the last time,

was met by her aunt, who led her in silence into the entrance hall. There the servants of the family, and many of the objects of their charity from the village, were assembled to bid a long farewell, and to pray for the choicest blessings of Heaven on their youthful mistress and Miss Granville.

Overwhelmed by these marks of affectionate attention, Caroline was hastening to the coach, when Lady Ennerdale invited her to partake, along with her cousin, of some refreshments that were set out in the drawing-room ; but gently disengaging herself from her aunt, she thought only of escaping from a scene of such bitter affliction. Her advance to the carriage was at this moment interrupted by a favourite little dog, who jumped about her, licked her hands, and shewed every

mark of the liveliest joy at seeing his former mistress ; for it had been given to Louisa Beverly, as a token of her remembrance.

“ Poor dear Fidelle,” she exclaimed, as she caught the dog up in her arms, and hid her face in the neck of the little faithful animal, “ how could I ever give thee away !” Then hastily replacing it on the ground, she threw herself into a corner of the coach. Here her effort at composure entirely forsook her, and bursting into a flood of tears, she concealed her face with her handkerchief. Lady Ennerdale witnessed in silence the state of mental agitation under which she was labouring, and from her knowledge of the movements of the human heart, she used no arguments of consolation, but suffered the motherless girl to ex-

haust herself, by indulging without restraint in a paroxysm of sobs and tears.

Constance wept not, but, lost in the depth of her reflections, she neither spoke nor seemed conscious of any thing around her.

In this state the travellers proceeded onwards for some hours, and reaching the inn where they were to pass the night, they retired to their rooms, to recruit by sleep their bodily fatigues, and to recover by prayer and resignation that degree of mental firmness, of which they all stood so much in need.

Very early the following morning Lady Ennerdale and her sorrowing companions proceeded onwards in their journey. She was anxious to reach Ennerdale Castle that night, and

both the girls were too much absorbed in their own thoughts, to be able to derive any pleasure from the passing scenes. At any other time they would have been delighted with the richness and beauty of the country through which they were travelling, but now they surveyed it with indifference.

Late in the evening of one of the hottest days of the month of August, after a journey of more than eighty miles, the party reached Ennerdale Castle. The night was delightful, the sky was fancifully intermixed with the deep red clouds, which the setting sun had left, and with the light and silvery ones, which the moon had formed in her rising. The noise of a water-fall, which rushed down with the rapidity of a mountain torrent, and was heard from a distant quarter of the park, had

attracted the attention of Constance ; and as the moon reflected her pale beams around, it gave her an opportunity of viewing the diversified and romantic scenery, along which they were rapidly moving. The park appeared to be very extensive ; and they now descended into a valley that led to the castle ; as they advanced nearer, the gothic towers of Ennerdale appeared enveloped in wood, and surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills ; and in a few minutes they entered the fine avenue of elms leading up to the castle.

The painted windows, the noble portico, and the marble staircase of the gothic hall, struck Caroline and Constance with wonder, astonishment, and admiration. They, who had never seen any mansion larger than that of

Beverley Park, were lost in amazement at the stately magnificence of all around them.

They were conducted into the drawing-room, where coffee was immediately served; and when Caroline had examined the fine collection of pictures, and admired the costly furniture of the apartment, she pleaded fatigue, and requested leave to retire.

The young ladies were then conducted by the housekeeper to the rooms selected for them: but neither felt inclined to separate, and they determined to pass that night together.

The next morning Caroline arose at an early hour, and being dressed before her cousin, she perceived a door which led out of the bed-room; and on opening it, she found herself in a large and comfortable parlour, furnished

with all the conveniences which art could suggest. In addition to the furniture were to be seen a harp, a piano-forte, cases of books, and every requisite for drawing. The voice of Lady Ennerdale now reminded her that she might be wanted, and she returned to her cousin.

“ I come to seek you, my loves, and to inquire after your healths ; if you are ready, we will now descend to the breakfast room ; ” and taking a hand of each, she proceeded with them to where the breakfast was prepared. The apartment into which they entered had windows to the ground, and opened into a conservatory ; and every thing, both within and without, was calculated to excite their admiration.

“ You are too much fatigued, my dear, to go out to-day,” said Lady En-

nerdale, “ I will, therefore, conduct you to your sitting-room ; and, as I have some letters to write, you may either amuse yourselves with your studies, or in rambling about the castle till dinner time.” She then took them to the same room which Caroline had seen in the morning, and informed them that it was to be exclusively their own.

They both expressed their thanks for this kindness, and proceeded to an inspection of its contents.

A week had now elapsed since their arrival, when Lord Ennerdale returned to the castle. Constance loved her mother, but insensibly contracted a dread of her father’s presence. Her grief, though less violent at first than her cousin’s, was likely from her character to be of longer duration ; and

the slightest allusion to the subject of her aunt would at all times oppress her spirits, and render her silent for the remainder of the day. Lord Ennerdale received them with the greatest kindness, and told Caroline that she should be always treated as his daughter, and that he would ever regard her in that light. This speech drew torrents from the eyes of poor Caroline ; her uncle and aunt endeavoured to soothe the weeping girl ; and Lord Melrose, who had accompanied his son-in-law to meet the party at Ennerdale, told her, with the most impressive kindness, that whilst his life should be spared she should never want a friend and protector. He left them the next day ; and calling Caroline aside, he presented her with twenty guineas

for pocket-money, for which she gratefully made her acknowledgments, and giving her his blessing, he departed, on his return to London.

CHAPTER X.

Two months had nearly passed away without any remarkable event taking place at the castle ; and Caroline and Constance, whose affliction for the loss of Lady Emily had in some degree yielded to the change of scene, and the calm voice of reason, were now become familiarized and happy in their new abode, and were making daily progress in every branch of their studies and their accomplishments : for they well knew, that the tasteful superstructure of education must be our own work, however ably the foundation may have been laid by others ; and that to relax, *because* they

were grown up, would be a certain proof of their being insensible to the real benefits of instruction, the improvements of our moral and religious characters, and the supplying us with a lasting and independent source of happiness in every after period of our lives.

Lord Melrose had much wished the party to join him in London soon after Christmas : but Lady Ennerdale declined the invitation, as she had determined not to visit the metropolis before the succeeding winter, when the two cousins would have completed their eighteenth year. She thought they were then too young to be introduced into society ; and, besides, the recent death of Lady Emily made it improper for any of them to partake of the gaieties of fashionable life : nor

could she resolve to leave them under the charge of any one; and she had felt too much pleasure in their society, to be willing to exchange it for any other plan that might draw her from her retirement.

At Christmas, the youthful party were to be joined by Georgina de Clifford, a niece of Lord Ennerdale's, who had just left school, and was engaged to spend some time with her cousin, and both the girls were now looking forward with impatience for her arrival.

This season of the year had ever brought along with it unalloyed pleasure, both to Constance and Caroline; and the benevolence of Lord and Lady Ennerdale enabled them to enlarge the measure of their charities, and to diffuse comfort and happiness to num-

bers around the castle; thus enlivening the dreary prospect of nature by the expressive joy and gratitude shewn by the inmates of every cottage, to which their bounty extended.

One day, after they had returned from a long ramble and retired to their own rooms, they were summoned by Lady Ennerdale to the drawing-room. On entering, they perceived, seated by her Ladyship, a slight, elegant looking girl, who on their approach rose from her seat, and advanced towards them.

Lady Ennerdale said, “ my dear Constance, here is Georgina; and I trust that, notwithstanding you have never met before, you will love each other as much as your near relationship warrants.”

Constance kissed the snowy brow of her cousin; who, to express how much

she wished for her friendship, threw her arms around her neck.

An introduction to Caroline then followed; and the visitor was shortly led to her apartment by the young ladies, who were as much disposed to esteem, as they already admired, the lovely object before them.

Georgina de Clifford was the only daughter of Lord Ennerdale's sister; she had lost her mother at an early age, and had passed the succeeding years at a fashionable boarding-school. Her holidays were usually spent either at her father's house or with her grandmother, who doated upon her to a fault; and M. de Clifford himself looked upon his daughter as a prodigy of beauty, elegance, and learning. It would not, therefore, have been very wonderful, if Georgina had been both

spoiled and conceited, from the deference which was uniformly paid to all her wishes during her father's lifetime.

She had lost this too indulgent parent upwards of twelve months, and was left under the guardianship of her grandmother, and of her uncle, Lord Ennerdale.

In person she was short, but slight in proportion : her neck and face were white as alabaster, her eyes black, and strikingly expressive ; her hair of the same colour, long and glossy. But it was not by her features alone that she charmed the observer ; there was a fascination in her manners, that could hardly fail to attract the attention of every one. In every thing of elegance and spirit she was calculated to take a lead, and she appeared so amiable,

submissive, and obedient, as to have no will of her own, but to be made solely for the happiness of others. Constance alone, of all the party at Ennerdale, distrusted her shewy pretensions, though she did not think it right to express her suspicions even to Caroline; and to no one was Georgina so attentive and affectionate as to herself.

Lady Ennerdale, however, observed the reserve of her daughter's behaviour towards her cousin, and when they were alone together she questioned her about it. "If I did not know you so well, I should say it was envy, my love, that dictates your capricious conduct towards Georgina, with all her beauty and elegance; the pains she takes to gain your affection make her appear particularly amiable in my sight: why do you decline her friendship with so

much coldness?" Constance made little reply to her mother's observation.— She could not, she observed, regard her as much as she did Caroline; but, for the future, she would endeavour to be marked in her attentions towards her.

Company now much occupied much of Lady Ennerdale's time, and she seldom saw the girls except at meal-times. They passed their mornings in practising their various accomplishments, and generally walked out or rode in the grounds some part of the day.

Caroline and Georgina were hardly ever separated; and, from the similarity of their situations, they appeared to derive new affection for each other. At this time Lady Ennerdale was much distressed by the loss of a pink

topaz cross of great price, which she valued highly, as it had been the gift of a particular friend ; and had many inquiries made after it. One day, returning from a drive which she had been taking with her daughter and Georgina, she went into the drawing-room, and throwing off her bonnet, her attention was attracted by a letter addressed to herself. She opened it, and read it with great interest ; again she perused it, and then gave it to Constance ; on reading it the colour forsook her cheeks, and she uttered an exclamation of surprise. The letter was as follows :

“ If Lady Ennerdale will look into
“ a small box in the third drawer of
“ the chest belonging to Miss Villiers,
“ she will there find the cross which has
“ been so long sought for. If she dis-

“ regards this hint, it will ere long be
“ removed and disposed of by its pre-
“ sent possessor.”

There was neither date nor name to give any clue as to the writer of this extraordinary epistle. That it was written by some one acquainted with the house was evident; the writing was legible, but bad. Lady Ennerdale was perplexed what course to take. Could it be possible that Caroline had taken the cross, that she could be a thief? her heart said no. But still the circumstances were so minutely detailed, and the improbability of any one asserting so serious a falsehood appalled her. For some time these thoughts occupied her mind, without her coming to any decisive opinion. At length she determined upon going to Caroline, to shew her the letter,

and then search in the place named for the lost trinket ; it then struck her as somewhat odd that she had declined accompanying them on their drive, and what at another time would not have been considered as singular, now appeared to be a mark of guilt.

Deeply grieved, Lady Ennerdale ascended to Caroline's apartment. She found her reading: no symptom of confusion was visible in her countenance upon her aunt's appearance ; after seating herself, she gave the letter to Caroline. A bright crimson mounted to her face as she read it.

“ Will you do me the favour, madam, since you have thought this epistle worth notice, to do as it requires?” and she hurried to the drawers. She opened the third ; in one corner stood a box, which she calmly handed

to her aunt, who took off the lid, and the first article she beheld was the pink topaze cross. Astonishment mingled with anger was depicted on the face of Caroline : grief and conviction on that of Lady Ennerdale. Neither spoke for a few minutes, but Caroline first recovered herself. “ My accusers have taken care not to convict me without evidence,” said the deeply wounded girl ; “ can you believe that I, the child of your beloved sister, and one whom you have known so long and so well, could or would stoop to the meanness of a theft. Think rather, dearest madam, that the person who has been guilty of the act, may have had the baseness to lay it upon me, for the purpose of avoiding detection.”

“ I am unwilling,” said Lady Ennerdale, “ to condemn you ; but cir-

cumstances are so much against you, it is my duty, both as your protectress and your aunt, to mark my reprobation of a crime, for which at present I can discover neither repentance or sorrow. Persist not, by an obstinate denial, to aggravate your offence. Remember, Caroline, there is an eye who now beholds you, and knows whether you are justly or unjustly accused. How deeply would this action have grieved your now sainted mother! "She would see," said Caroline, interrupting her, "that I am innocent. Till you shall be convinced that I have not stolen your property, what is the course you intend to pursue towards me?" "For the present you must remain alone; before dinner I will send you my final determination," and Lady Ennerdale left her room.

Caroline remained standing for some

time without moving from the place where her aunt left her ; surprise was the first painful emotion that arose in her mind. Who, she thought, could have known where her drawers stood, or who could be so wicked as to accuse her of such baseness? Such were the reflections that alternately passed in her mind. At the expiration of two hours the door opened, and Constance stood before her. "I am desired to tell you, dearest Caroline, that you are to accompany me to the drawing-room."

"As it is my aunt's desire I will obey. I almost wonder that she should wish me to associate with any of her family; a thief, as doubtless I am considered by all."

"Never, Caroline by me," said her cousin affectionately ; saying which, she offered her hand to her with all her wonted affection.

Caroline's prejudices were strong; the idea of Constance being her secret enemy had forcibly struck her, and, in the first instance, strongly impressed on her mind, she repelled her advances with coldness, and proceeded to the drawing-room, to meet with firmness whatever might be her aunt's determination.

Lord and Lady Ennerdale and Georgina were in the apartment: on her entering her aunt said to her:

“By the advice of Lord Ennerdale, I shall now drop any further allusions to this painful subject. Though I fear I can never love you as I once did, I will make no apparent difference in my behaviour towards you before strangers: and as the present party and my unknown correspondent are only acquainted with the subject, I

trust it will never extend further. May you, Caroline, ere it be too late, practise the good instructions of your mother; and may this be a lesson to you, to abstain from conduct which will blight your happiness, both in this world and in that which is to come."

Tears rose to the eyes of the afflicted Caroline during her aunt's address; but dinner being announced, she was prevented saying any thing in reply.

A week passed away in this uncomfortable manner, Lady Ennerdale rarely either seeing or speaking to her, except in company. Caroline studiously avoided all intercourse with Constance, for some hints had been instilled into her mind that to her she owed her present miserable situation; Georgina De Clifford was often too much engaged to spend any part of

the day in the room of her friend, and many hours of it she passed alone.

Lady Juliet Hastings, who has before been named as the youngest sister of Lady Emily, who had married, without her being aware of it, many years before her death, had arrived with her only surviving daughter to spend some time at the castle. Maria Hastings was not like either of her cousins: she was neither remarkably pretty nor remarkably clever, but good-tempered and unassuming in the highest degree.

Lady Juliet Hastings was a woman of the world, and a votary of fashion in its fullest sense. She would probably have made an amiable and domestic character, had her education been directed to that point; but being the youngest of the family, she more wil-

lingly followed the example of Lady Melrose than her elder sisters ; and since her marriage she had always led a dissipated life : in which she was encouraged by Mr. Hastings, who was as seldom at home as her Ladyship. She had once been remarkable for her beauty, but was reduced to the mere wreck of what had formerly attracted such general admiration ; her health delicate, her mind listless, and her constitution worn out with a routine of dissipation, she consented to pass a short time in the retirement of Ennerdale Castle.

When Constance and Caroline first saw their aunt, they were forcibly struck with her likeness to the dear relation they had lost. With Maria they were not particularly pleased ; and the fashionable indolence of Lady

Juliet Hastings formed a striking contrast to the manners of her lamented sister. As the weather had become very fine, an expedition was proposed to visit one of the romantic caves, not far from Ennerdale : all the party except Caroline, who had a cold, agreed to go.

Soon after they had set off, Caroline went down stairs to the drawing-room for something she had left there, when her attention was caught by a note which had fallen on the edge of one of the stairs ; it was without direction and unsealed, so that she thought herself justified in reading the contents : which alarmed her in the highest degree, for it was much to the same purport as the former which Lady Ennerdale had received ; and stated, that if her Ladyship wanted her gold .

thimble, it would be found concealed in a particular place in Caroline's room.

Caroline considered a moment with herself, and then retraced her steps to her own apartment, and searched for it in vain ; and was obliged to conclude that it had not yet been taken, and the note had dropped accidentally from the unprincipled person who was plotting against her character. What course should be pursued, and whom she should consult on the present occasion, occupied all her thoughts ; and fervently did she bewail the loss of her best and earliest monitor. Georgina De Clifford was the only person in the house to whom she could now name the subject ; she locked up the note in her desk, and awaited with impatience for the return of the party.

Like many other parties of pleasure, this did not end so pleasantly as it had begun. The carriage in which Lady Ennerdale was had gone first; and where the road was narrow and bad, a drove of cattle had frightened the horses and made them unmanageable; in vain the coachman and servant endeavoured to arrest their speed, but without success; the carriage was overturned, Lady Ennerdale was severely cut by the glass, and conveyed in a state of insensibility to the other carriage; she was attended home by Lady Juliet, and the rest of the party agreed to walk.

On their unexpected return to the castle, Caroline hurried down stairs to ascertain the cause of their having postponed the party. On seeing her aunt conveyed to her room, and covered with blood, and almost insen-

sible, she trembled so violently as to be scarce able to move. She was relieved from her apprehensions for her aunt's safety by Lady Juliet giving her an account of what had happened, and assuring her that there was no danger to be apprehended. Without considering any thing of what had occurred to her, or reflecting on the injustice of her aunt's suspicions, she flew to her apartment, and stationed herself by the bedside. On Lady Ennerdale's recovering she raised her eyes, and perceiving Caroline, held out her hand ; her niece caught it, and kissed her pale cheek.

“ Are you better, my dearest aunt ? ” said the affectionate girl, as she hung over the bed.

“ Yes, my love, I am not much hurt ; it might have been worse. ”

Caroline felt delighted ; this was the

first time she had been addressed by so endearing a name since the affair of the cross. Again she spoke, to invite a repetition of the sounds which gave happiness to her heart ; but Lady Ennerdale had possibly remembered the circumstance, and relapsed into her usual coldness and reserve.

The rest of the party now reached the castle. Caroline left her aunt's room in search of Georgina, whom she found busily engaged in Maria's room ; and no opportunity offered of seeing her alone that day.

CHAPTER XI.

THOUGH Lady Ennerdale's accident was at first alarming, yet its effects were soon removed ; and in a day or two she was able to remove down stairs. Georgina De Clifford had persuaded Caroline not to shew the note which she had found to her aunt. It was settled that she was to leave Ennerdale Castle in a week, after having passed nearly three months with Lady Ennerdale, during all which time she and Caroline had hardly ever been separated for a single hour, though for the last fortnight they had been less together than before. Caroline dreaded her departure, as the removal of the

only being who cared for or loved her. More than once she had thought of requesting Lady Ennerdale to permit her to go to a private seminary, where she might perfect herself in the routine of teaching, and qualify herself to engage as governess in some family of respectability; this plan often rose to the mind of the high-spirited Caroline, for to be dependent on the bounty of her relations was at all times painful; but to be so whilst labouring under the stigma of dishonesty was intolerable. The more frequently she reflected on this plan, the more she wished to carry it into execution. In this frame of mind she went down to the drawing-room, where, reclining on a sofa, and half asleep, Lady Juliet Hastings was deploring to herself the tedious monotony of a country life.

Caroline approached her, and gently expressed her hopes that she had not disturbed her meditations.

“ My dear Caroline,” said her ladyship, yawning, “ I wonder how you can exist here, it is so dull ! I shall expire through *ennui* if I remain here much longer ; do you think Lady Ennerdale would allow you to be my guest for a short time ? ”

“ I will ask her, my dearest aunt,” said Caroline with warmth ; “ of all things I should prefer it at present.”

Lady Juliet was gratified at what she took for affection on the part of her niece ; taking her hand, she said—

“ I should love you for my dear sister’s sake, if I did not for your own. What a melancholy life she led ! I wonder it did not kill her long before.

“ Her hopes and wishes were fixed

on another and a better world," said Caroline, her eyes filling at the same time with tears at the remembrance of her mother.

At this moment Lady Ennerdale came into the room ; and Lady Juliet made her request, in which she was joined by Caroline.

" I cannot part with Caroline at present," said her aunt with coldness, " at some future period she will be happy to accept your invitation."

A shade of disappointment passed across the generally placid face of Lady Juliet ; and Caroline could not conceal her tears.

" At some time, madam, when you are at leisure, I should be very glad to see you for a few minutes alone."

" In half an hour, Caroline, I shall

be in my dressing-room, and will send for you.”

With agitation Caroline waited for the promised audience when she should be summoned to the dressing-room of Lady Ennerdale. Her Ladyship was seated at a table with her work before her. Caroline told her aunt, as well as she was able, the nature of her request. Her Ladyship's face betrayed no emotion of either surprise or anger ; she calmly, coldly, and laconically replied :

“ In other circumstances I should have put a decided negative on this plan ; most probably you would not have proposed it to me—as it is, I think your determination a wise one. I will name it to Lord Ennerdale, and if he coincides with me, I will write to a lady who conducts a respectable

seminary, and with whom I am acquainted; the sooner all is settled the better, as that will be most agreeable to all parties." Lady Ennerdale then rose to leave the room, and Caroline went to seek Georgina; and on the bosom of her friend gave a free vent to the bitterness of her anguish.

The conversation was not again noticed by Lady Ennerdale till bed-time, when she again called Caroline to her dressing-room, and told her that her uncle had agreed to the plan, and that she intended immediately making the necessary arrangements for her reception at Mrs. M——'s.

Caroline now began seriously to reflect on her future prospects. Her self-love was hurt (though perhaps she was hardly aware of it), by the indifference with which her aunt listened

to her proposal of leaving Ennerdale Castle, and she retired to her bed, determined in her own mind that, let what might be the consequence, she would exert herself to the utmost of her abilities, in the performance of and adherence to those principles which her dear and lamented parent had instilled into her heart. These reflexions composed her agitation, and the consciousness of her innocence enabled her to compose herself to sleep, and to an entire forgetfulness of her present uncomfortable state.

“ I have much wished,” said Lady Ennerdale (a few days after her conversation with Caroline), “ to make Georgina a present before she leaves us. I wish I knew what she would like. Have you, my love, given her the ring you intended ?”

“No, mamma, I meant to give it to her this morning.”

“Then go and give it to her now, and come to me presently.”

Constance hastened to obey her mother, and proceeded to Georgina's room. On her way thither she was met by Caroline, who agreed to accompany her to her cousin's apartment.

“May we come in, Georgina?” said Constance, as she tapped at the door.

“Oh yes, if you will put up with all the disagreeables of an untidy apartment, as I have been busy all the morning, and am tired to death with packing up my things.”

“Why did you do it yourself, dear Georgina? You had better have had Marianne to have done it for you.”

“ Oh no : I have finished my labours now,” said Georgina, laughing.

“ I have brought you a small token of my regard, which I beg you will keep for my sake ;” saying which, Constance placed her gift on the fair finger of Miss De Clifford.”

Georgina turned to kiss the cheek of her cousin ; and was in the very act of doing so, when her foot was caught by a string with which she had been fastening a box, and she was thrown with great force to the ground. For a few minutes she was stunned by the fall ; and while Constance assisted her cousin to the bed, Caroline picked up the trinkets that were strewed in all directions about the room. A small roll of cotton, very carefully folded up, attracted her attention : she undid it,

but what was her surprise and astonishment on seeing the gold thimble which belonged to her aunt, and which she had missed the preceding day. She hastily refolded it, and hurried out of the room.

“ Could Georgina—could her friend have taken the thimble—could she, who for the space of three months had lived with her under the same roof, and who was half idolized by her, be guilty of a complication of such crimes as theft and ingratitude? Was she, for such a false friend, to sacrifice her home, her character, and her honour, and be deprived of the affection of her nearest and dearest relatives?” These were the questions which Caroline put to her heart. The grief she had felt at being herself accused was trifling, compared with what

she now suffered at the proof of Georgina's baseness. She fell on her knees and sobbed aloud ; when hearing footsteps approaching, she hastily rose, and Constance and Georgina entered, to invite her to accompany them on a walking excursion. On perceiving something had happened to agitate her, the latter would have remained: but Caroline almost ordered her to leave the apartment, and declined being of their party.

Long did she ponder what steps she should take, for she could not bring her mind to declare publicly that her friend was the guilty person. The plan she at length fixed upon was to write to her ; and she laid the following note, together with the thimble, on the dressing-table of Georgina.

“ We have been friends, Georgina ;
“ I have and am still willing to sacri-
“ fice much to save you from the pain
“ of the disgrace which I myself,
“ though conscious of my innocence,
“ have been made to endure. Do not
“ endeavour to see me alone ; dearly
“ as I once loved you, I ill merited
“ the return which you have made
“ me. I will not upbraid you ; may
“ the reproaches of your own heart be
“ your only punishment. You will
“ leave Ennerdale to-morrow ; should
“ the remembrance of the being whom
“ you have ruined in the estimation
“ of her friends ever rise to your
“ recollection, call to mind that she
“ forgives you, and will always be glad
“ to hear of your welfare.

“ It will make no difference in my
“ future prospects, as Lady Ennerdale

“ shall never be undeceived by me on
“ this subject, nor to any living crea-
“ ture will I ever reveal what have
“ been the motives of my change of
“ conduct towards you.—Farewell.”

Caroline remained in her own room till summoned to dinner; her face was dejected, and her eyes red with weeping. Lady Ennerdale took no notice of it. Once or twice, during dinner, Caroline caught a glimpse of the face of her cousin, and perceived with astonished amazement that gaiety, and the same animated smile still played on the ruby lips of Georgina De Clifford.

Unable either to conceal her own feelings or bear the gaze of the company, she retired soon after dinner, and remained alone for the remainder of the evening.

CHAPTER XII.

ON the following morning there was such a violent storm of wind and rain, that Miss De Clifford was unavoidably detained at the castle. Lady Ennerdale, who intended to present her niece with a locket containing her own hair, and some other ornaments for her person, went in search of Georgina after the engagements of the morning were over; but not finding her in her room, she sat down at the writing-table and penned an affectionate note, in which she desired her to value the trinkets for the sake of one who loved her tenderly; and having folded and directed her note, she proceeded to

wrap them up in a piece of brown paper, that she had picked up for the purpose from the floor. It was squeezed and crumpled up, and had evidently been a part of a letter which Georgina had intended to destroy. The characters of the hand-writing were so familiar to Lady Ennerdale, that she could not resist such a favourable opportunity as was now accidentally afforded her of clearing up her doubts of Caroline, by the disclosures which she might be expected to make in her correspondence with Georgina; and her Ladyship was in the act of reading the letter, when Constance and her cousin entered the room.

“What is here, Georgina?” said her aunt; “a letter from Caroline.”

At these words, she hastily ran towards the table, and snatching the

paper from the hands of her astonished aunt, flung it instantly into the fire.

Lady Ennerdale was a lady of a temper not to be trifled with ; and as she had read far enough to be aware that it related to the subject of the “ topaz cross,” she insisted on having a full explanation of the contents of the letter ; and finding, after a pause, that she was likely to get no reply, she added, “ you are not, perhaps, aware that I have seen all that is material of the letter ?”

Georgina turned as pale as death at these words, and hesitatingly admitted that it was from Caroline, respecting her trinket-box.

The suspicion of her having wronged that hitherto faultless girl flashed so strongly at the moment on Lady Ennerdale’s mind, that she resolved on

having her doubts cleared up by an immediate examination of the trinket-box. I came here, Georgina, to ask for the key of this little box, and in order to add to its contents; and if what you allege was the sole subject of the letter, I shall be satisfied.

Colourless, and faltering in her voice, she replied that she had mislaid the key.

“That excuse cannot serve you,” replied Lady Ennerdale, “my own keys shall be tried, and if none will fit, the lock shall be broken.”

Whilst Constance was dispatched with a message to her Ladyship's maid, the self-convicted girl stood almost motionless, and in a state of mental agitation, which those only can feel who have been suddenly checked and detected in their career of villainy.

The box, when opened, contained, amongst a variety of her own ornaments, her aunt's gold thimble.

Lady Ennerdale did not utter a word, but merely held up the missing thimble before Georgina with an action more expressive than the sharpest accusation, and then quitted the room.

The conscience-struck girl sunk at her feet in an agony of wretchedness; and the affectionate Constance, who rejoiced sincerely at the full discovery of Caroline's perfect innocence, commiserated at the same time the dreadful situation of her unfortunate cousin; and not wishing to expose her by calling for assistance, herself raised her from the ground, and assisted in recovering her by the proper remedies from the fainting fit in which she had fallen.

Here let us pause : and may all our young readers feel in its proper light the degrading situation into which Georgina De Clifford has been precipitated by her own ill conduct ; and while they pity her fall from rectitude, may they studiously avoid the errors by which she has been seduced to ruin ; and may they be impressed with a deep sense of the mercy of God in blessing them with religious parents, who will guide their feet in the paths of virtue, and early imbue their tender minds with those true principles of reasoning and action, which point out and lead us forward to the great object of our destination here on earth.

Deprived in early life of a mother's watchfulness, educated for shew and admiration rather than solid attainments, superficially instructed in the

practical duties of religion, and accustomed to command every gratification from the weak indulgence of her father, Georgina insensibly acquired habits of unrestrained and daring selfishness, which proved most injurious to every principle of honour, rectitude, and truth, and led her by a necessary consequence to the commission of the crime in which she was detected. No implanted virtues operated as supports in the hour of temptation; and no fears, save those of detection, served as restraints on the lawless passions of the heart, at the moment of hoped-for gratification.

To those who, like Georgina, look only to earthly things, regardless of all but the immediate consequences of the crime, we would say from the example before us, “repent ere it be too late;”

we would sketch for their instruction the picture of youth, beauty, and lively spirits, sinking under the fatal influence of a neglected education, and bereft of happiness, respectability and almost of a home; and the conclusion would forcibly present itself, that the early inculcation of the principles of piety, benevolence, and self-restraint can alone ensure the enjoyment of virtuous happiness here, and of heaven hereafter.

On quitting the above scene of detected guilt, Lady Ennerdale hastened in search of Caroline; whom she found sitting in her bed-room with her face resting on her hands, and oppressed with the weight of her reflections; indeed, she had not perceived the entrance of her aunt, and was startled by her saying, "I am come, my injured

Caroline, to do you justice ; to acquit you of every suspicion, and to ask your forgiveness for my own precipitate judgment against you.”

Raising her head from her hands, and bursting into tears, she faintly articulated, “ is Georgina then discovered ? and am I again entitled to hold a place in the affections of my dearest aunt ? ” Without waiting for a reply, she threw herself on the neck of Lady Ennerdale, and sealed her forgiveness with a thousand kisses.

A few minutes restored them both to composure, and they went in search of Constance. But the heart of Caroline was too full for the society of others ; and though delighted at what concerned herself, she could not help feeling the deepest compassion for her unfortunate cousin.

Alone, and on her knees, she poured forth to her Almighty Father the thanksgiving of a grateful heart, and offered up her prayers for the continuance of his gracious favour, and that under every trial she might be enabled to adhere to virtuous principles, and to leave the result to his blessed will. Nor did she forget to petition at the throne of mercy for her misguided friend ; that a timely repentance, and the knowledge of the truth in Jesus Christ, might lead her to feel and know the fatal tendency of her wickedness, and to curb those evil desires which had led her to deviate from the path of innocence.

At an early hour on the following morning Georgina, who could not bear the thoughts of being seen by any of the family, quitted Ennerdale

Castle for the residence of her grandmother; but on her table was found the following letter, addressed to Constance.

“ Your gentleness, my dear Con-
“ stance, and uniform kindness, even
“ to those who do not deserve your
“ compassion, emboldens me to ad-
“ dress you in preference to my in-
“ jured and justly irritated Caroline.
“ The veil is now removed; you have
“ seen me in a situation for which
“ even you must abhor me—seen me
“ as a thief and a perfidious inmate in
“ your house. Disguise can no longer
“ avail. I am conscious of my errors,
“ but see no present path for amend-
“ ment. I never loved Caroline. My
“ every wish, from my first abode
“ amongst you, was to be exclusively
“ possessed of your affection, and to

“ rival, and then supplant her in the
“ estimation of your mother. You are
“ aware how well I succeeded: but
“ you can fully know how ill she de-
“ served such a return at my hands.
“ I gained her love partly by my en-
“ deavours to weaken her attachment
“ for yourself, and by my insinuations
“ that you were become her secret
“ enemy. It was I who wrote the
“ anonymous letters, and who placed
“ the cross in her drawer, when I
“ found that it would be no longer
“ safe to keep it for myself.

“ She was an easy prey for the art-
“ ful—open and unsuspecting almost
“ to a fault; her very inmost thoughts
“ were disclosed to my unworthy con-
“ fidence. The letter which your
“ mother found, impressed upon my
“ heart a conviction of my fault.

“ Till that moment I did not know
“ how well she deserved my love.
“ Remorse seized upon my soul, and
“ I would have given worlds to have
“ recalled the past, and to have re-
“ gained my friend—but it was too
“ late, and I had gone too far to re-
“ cede. I resumed my unembarrassed
“ manners in company and at the
“ table, and took no notice of Caro-
“ line’s altered behaviour.

“ You, Constance, cannot guess what
“ I feel at this moment ; your pure
“ and amiable heart has never had
“ any cause for bitter repentance. As
“ we may not probably meet again for
“ years to come, allow me to intreat
“ for your forgiveness ; and that Lady
“ Ennerdale will permit me to have
“ the melancholy satisfaction of some-
“ times hearing from one, who will

“ always be sincerely loved and ad-
“ mired by her unhappy cousin,

“ GEORGINA DE CLIFFORD.”

Many tears were shed by both the girls over the letter of Georgina ; and from time to time Lady Ennerdale, and occasionally Constance, wrote to her according to her request. At the expiration of a year she lost her grandmother, and Lord Ennerdale was left her sole guardian. After much consideration, it was determined that she should spend some time with a respectable lady ; and that, as soon as her faults should be corrected, she should again become an inmate at Ennerdale Castle, under the mild but steady control of Mrs. Henley. Georgina De Clifford became as distinguished for amiableness of disposition as she had formerly been for outward accomplish-

ments. An ardent desire to correct her faults, and a constant endeavour to attain to what she had witnessed in Caroline's character, were amply rewarded by her becoming equally good, and equally beloved.

At the end of two years she returned to Ennerdale. No longer the gay and artificial character she had been, but an amiable and virtuous young woman. The good propensities of her nature had been called into action by the counsels, and still more by the bright example of Mrs. Henley : and she soon regained the esteem and love of those who had witnessed the extent and enormity of her transgression.

Lady Ennerdale, who could not again have been made the dupe of artifice and cunning, was so satisfied with her real improvements in every

quality of the heart and head, that she admitted her to a full participation of her friendship and affection ; and she became the chosen friend of the excellent and noble-minded Caroline, and was dearer to her heart than she had ever been before. Such was the reformed Georgina De Clifford ; and may all find their happiness, as was so clearly her case, in the exercise of goodness, in alleviating the distresses of others, in the sweet duty of benevolence, and in a steady adherence to those principles which procure esteem among men, and lay the foundation of never-ending joys.

Caroline (for we must now return to our history), after the discovery which had been made, became dearer than ever to her affectionate friends at the castle ; her grief was sincere and

deep at the misconduct of Georgina, and the consequences which her unrestrained temper had entailed upon her. The lesson of experience (though severe and painful in the trial) proved of the greatest service to herself during the remainder of her life.

A very few weeks after this event had taken place, Lady Juliet Hastings was summoned to London to attend at the death-bed of her husband, who fell a victim of dissipation : and after a short period she was prevailed upon to remove with her daughter to the neighbourhood of Ennerdale Castle. But another blow was wanting to humble this worldly-minded lady, and it came in the way most likely to subdue her to meekness—a rapid consumption hurried to the grave her only unmarried daughter, Maria Hastings, at

the early age of eighteen. Gentle, mild, and unassuming, she died beloved and lamented by all.

Caroline, ever regardless of her own personal comforts in promoting the happiness of others, readily acceded to the wishes of her disconsolate aunt, and became her inmate and only companion. Great was the struggle which she experienced in parting from Constance ; but the example and precepts of her dear and never to be forgotten mother had sunk deep into her heart, and become the rule of her conduct and how this beloved mother would have acted under any worldly change of circumstances, was the first question which Caroline asked herself on all occasions ; and by the answer of her conscience she was always determined. But she was not destined to remain long in her new abode.

The titles and estates of Ennerdale, on failure of a male heir, descended to his Lordship's nephew, Mr. Granville, who, struck with the beauty, elegance, and excellent qualities of Caroline, prevailed on her to become his bride ; and every happiness promised to attend a union founded on prudence and mutual esteem—on a thorough knowledge of each other, and fully sanctioned by the approbation of the nearest relations of their respective families. Caroline, in becoming the destined mistress of Ennerdale Castle, strengthened by her conduct the affection of those who had known her the longest, and proved herself worthy of the rank to which she was exalted. By her affluence she was enabled to dispense the comforts of plenty to those around her ; and she found her

own happiness increased by enjoying it along with others. Exemplary in the discharge of every duty, she was adored by her friends and family, admired by those with whom she was only slightly acquainted, idolized by her husband, and crowned with the blessings of the poor. Constance found by experience, that excessive sensibility was no proof of real feeling, and too often was a cloak for the want of it; her endeavours were successfully used in conquering her almost only fault, and affectionately beloved by her friends, she made their wishes her law, and the studying their comforts, her happiness. Instead of the enthusiastic and romantic girl, she became the gentle, sensible and intelligent woman. She permitted no vain regrets for the past, or sanguine expectations of the

future, to disturb the even tenor of her life, happy from the regular performance of her various duties; attached to, and reciprocally beloved by all who treated her with affection; and looking on all the trials of this life as events calculated to render us more fit to leave it. Each day saw her advancing more and more towards perfection, and fully qualified for the station in which she was placed; her life was that of tranquil enjoyment, and a spirit of cheerful content spread its balmy influence over her mind and feelings, and reconciled her to all the changes of mortality.

Lord and Lady Ennerdale experienced, in the constant attentions of Constance and Caroline, all the comforts which declining age could desire; and enjoyed that general estimation

which their strict fulfilment of every relative and religious duty merited from all around them. Lord Ennerdale died a few years after Caroline had become Mrs. Granville ; and on this event both she and her husband anxiously pressed the widowed Lady Ennerdale and their beloved Constance to continue with them as members of one common family. But the cottage of Lady Emily which had been somewhat enlarged by its owner, was untenanted at this time, and it was agreeable to the feelings of both the ladies to take up their summer's abode, at a place where they had passed so many happy hours in the society of the best and kindest of women. But it was still doomed to be the abode of sorrow to Constance : for a sudden attack of fever, acting upon a weak

and worn out constitution, deprived her of one of the best of mothers within the first year after her father's death. Without much entreaty she again became the friend, the companion, and the inmate of her beloved Lord and Lady Ennerdale; and on the marriage of Caroline, Georgina De Clifford was selected as the chosen companion of Lady Juliet Hastings, who lived to discover that real worldly happiness does not consist in a round of gaiety; and that the exercise of the virtuous affections is the nearest approach to a perfect state of felicity in this world, and the surest means of its attainment in the next.

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* * HARRIS and SON, in addition to the above little Works, have several in MS. which it is their intention to publish at different periods; and, as they are anxious to produce such as have a tendency to convey useful information, as well as those of an infantile description, they hope to meet with a continuation of the encouragement which they have hitherto experienced.



